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snort



# THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Sunshine and showers

(R45p) 40p



Spin medicine: Alastair Campbell (left), Tony Blair's press secretary, with David Frost after the Labour leader (right) had appeared on the Breakfast with Frost programme yesterday. Photograph: David Rose

## Blair turns the screw on Europe

Anthony Bevis and Magnus Grimond

Tony Blair has put another lock on British entry into a European single currency. If a Blair cabinet believed that people would not vote for the currency in a referendum, it would not attempt to join up.

With all the polls - and former minister Edwina Currie - suggesting a Labour landslide, Mr Blair's big problem could be the battle against over-confidence and complacency, and he yesterday appealed to the voters to turn out on Thursday to ensure the Tories did not get a fifth term in office.

The first indication of Mr Blair's new condition on a single currency was delivered in a BBC Question Time interview with the Labour leader last week.

After he had repeated that it was "highly unlikely" that a Labour government would participate in the first wave of a single currency, Mr Blair was asked whether that was for economic reasons.

"For economic reasons and also for reasons to do with politics as well," he said. A Labour leadership source said it was a matter of common sense that the question would not be put to the voters, if they were certain to reject it.

The Government's position is that the Government will decide on economic terms alone. Mr Major told ITV's Jonathan Dimbleby programme yesterday: "I don't believe it is wise to go ahead unless you are absolutely copper-bottomed certain, not only that the [economic] convergence criteria are met, but that they are sustainable."

Mr Major also rejected a call from the International Monetary Fund that European Union nations should commit themselves to the January 1999 date for a single currency.

Repeating to a weekend warning from the IMF that most of Europe was now ready for Economic and Monetary Union and any delay could lead to turmoil in financial markets, Mr Major said: "Some people say it should go ahead in 1999 without knowing the economic circumstances, without knowing what it will mean, without knowing what a catastrophic impact it would have if it went wrong... I think it is highly unlikely that it can safely - I emphasise the word safely - go ahead in 1999."

Mr Major contradicted the IMF view that most of Europe was already well on the way to fulfilling the conditions laid down under the Maastricht criteria for EMU membership, saying it was "extremely unlikely" that other member states would meet the convergence criteria by 1999.

## Revealed: Tories' scare tactics over tax

Anthony Bevis Political Editor

A unique insight into the strategic thinking that goes into Tory election campaigns, obtained by *The Independent*, shows that tax scares work.

With the Tories planning to keep up their attacks on Labour's "hidden" tax agenda in the run-up to polling day, next Thursday, a very senior party adviser says that the 1992 charge that Labour was planning to hit people with a "tax bombshell" cost them the election.

The Tory strategist, who remains one of John Major's key advisers in the current campaign, says in an unpublished interview that when the 1992 election campaign opened, Labour had a very effective slogan; that it was time for a change.

"But we came up with something even more compelling," the adviser says; "it's not time to change; it could be worse; you can't trust Labour."

"And we stressed higher tax, both because people don't like paying it, but also because in a recession people sense that higher taxes are not a brilliant way out."

In fact, Mr Major raised taxes after the election, saying it was necessary precisely because of the recession, and he told London Weekend Television's Jonathan Dimbleby programme yesterday: "I had hoped to bring down the level, the over-

### QUICKLY

**Sex slavery**  
East European pimps and organised crime bosses are transporting up to half a million women and girls - some as young as 14 - into the European Union each year to be "sold like cattle" into sex slavery and enforced prostitution, European ministers were told at the weekend. Page 15

**Leander lifts bar**  
A move prompted by financial incentives as well as modern thinking, the 2,800 members of the Leander Rowing Club, same to Olympic gold medalists Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent, has dropped its 179-year bar on women rowing members. Page 3

## The inscrutable in pursuit of the unsingable

Mark Rowe

In what could be described as a case of the inscrutable in pursuit of the unsingable, a Japanese male voice choir today embarks upon what it may consider its ultimate musical challenge: singing a hymn in Welsh, in Wales.

The 27-member Fujisawa choir, which is beginning a week-long concert tour of Wales, has spent several months listening to audio tapes to learn the Welsh words phonetically.

The result will be renditions of "Ydy a Roddais" (Thou Who Gavest) and "Landamnos" at venues in Pembroke, Swansea, Ebbw Vale and Cardiff.

The choir was keen to attempt the Welsh hymns because Japan, like Wales, has a particularly strong choral tradition.

Alun John, the Cardiff choral conductor and teacher who organised the tour, said: "We are all looking forward with great anticipation to hearing the results."

## PERSONAL APPEAL TO FELLOW VOTERS

Dear Fellow Voter

For the first time in living memory we have the strongest and best managed major economy in the developed world. If the opinion polls are to be believed we could put all of this at risk this Thursday.

Over the last eighteen years our economy and our standing in the world has been transformed. Before Baroness Thatcher came to power we were the sick man of Europe, at the bottom of all the league tables, and it was being asked: "Is Britain governable?"

Now under John Major's leadership our economy is the envy of the world. This is best demonstrated by the way international industrialists are investing far more here than elsewhere in Europe.

Tony Blair is a keen advocate of many of the policies which are being followed in the rest of Europe. It is, therefore, wise to compare our unemployment rates with those elsewhere in Europe.

**UK GERMANY FRANCE SPAIN**  
6.1% 12.5% 12.7% 22.2%

Please, fellow voters, do not risk throwing away eighteen years of progress this Thursday.

Please join with me a vote Conservative.

Yours sincerely  
**Patrick Evershed**

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# Women join rowing elite after 179 years

Mark Rowe

In a move prompted by financial incentives as well as modern thinking, a male sporting bastion has dropped its 179-year bar on women being members.

The 2,800 members of the Leander Rowing Club, which is home to Olympic medallists Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent, voted for the move by a majority of more than the

required two-thirds after a three-hour meeting.

The decision has been prompted by an offer of a £1.5m National Lottery grant towards a £2.3m development plan.

One condition is that the club must comply with the Sports Council's open membership policy, which would mean that women must be accepted on the same terms as men.

The National Lottery had made

it clear to the club that it could no longer retain its exclusively male membership if it wanted £1.5m.

Leander, based at Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire, has for years allowed women crews to train, but has never invited them to become members, nor has the club ever built women's changing areas. The decision means they can become members and also use the facilities. The club's first rule states that

"qualification for membership is good fellowship and proficiency in oarsmanship".

Yesterday, Leander's chairman, Chris Rodrigues, said: "The club will remain a high-performance centre".

Mr Rodrigues said the Leander Club would pursue the lottery application, "provided it in no way compromises our rowing centre". He said the vote was based on principle.

Pinsent, who was in favour of the

move, said recently: "Of course, the club should be open to women. Probably a small percentage will object because it has been male-only for nearly 200 years, but that is not a legitimate reason to oppose it."

Dot Blackie, an Olympic oarswoman who coaches the Oxford women's team, said the move was vital if the club was to become a centre of excellence. "We need to be members so we can use their facilities."

Most of the women I know don't really care about belonging to the club itself. They have more interesting things to do with their time than join a country club."

Founded in 1818, Leander is Britain's oldest rowing club and the leading centre for the men's heavyweight national squad. In recent years it has provided the bulk of Britain's international teams, including more than half of the men's

heavyweight teams for the Atlanta Olympics last year.

The club can now expect to receive £1.5m towards the rebuilding and expansion of their Henley clubhouse, which celebrates the centenary of its building this year.

Their expansion plans include a purpose-built gymnasium, facilities for physiotherapy, medical assessment and treatment, and women's changing rooms.

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## Mad Dog: the car that fills up with sunshine

Nicholas Schoon drives the British-built vehicle of the future where the fuel is free

I have driven the future and it works – although I wouldn't like to try it in rush hour traffic, and I couldn't take the family on holiday in it.

Mad Dog is a British solar-powered car which has raced across Australia. It will be a star exhibit at the first World Sustainable Energy Trade Fair in Amsterdam next month.

It was built by engineering students and lecturers at the South Bank University, in London, at a cost of £20,000. The car is quite a contrast to the sleek, no-expense-spared Honda vehicle which easily won the trans-Australia World Solar Challenge last October and now features in a lavish advertising campaign on posters and television.

The Japanese car giant says its solar motor, the Dream, would cost £800,000 to buy – but the total costs of design, construction and taking part in the race are thought to be well over £1m. A team of more than 100 mechanics, technicians, engineers and public relations people fussed over it.

Mad Dog managed with a team of just five, the smallest among the 46 squads participating in the World Solar Challenge race. Simplicity, robustness and cheapness, along with the minimum possible weight, are the car's attributes. It glides along on three ordinary mountain bike wheels, with a large table top of solar cells stretching out behind its tiny cockpit. I was privileged to take the car for a spin along a quiet street behind the university's student union. You clamber in, then snuggle down into a low-slung seat. The compact steering wheel looks like an aircraft control column, and a "bubble" canopy of tinted transparent plastic is lowered over your head. It's a bit like being in a glider.

Flick the master switch, slide forward the hand throttle, lift your foot off the brake and off you go. The steering is a bit stiff and the motor is silent: all you hear is a quiet rumble of wheels. Mad Dog boasts brisk acceleration and a top speed of 65 kmph. Its average speed during

the 1,870-mile World Solar Challenge Race from Darwin to Adelaide last October was a leisurely 36kmph, compared with Honda's 90 kmph.

South Bank University's vehicle came 32nd but completed the course – unlike several other entrants. It is only the second British car to finish in the four trans-Australia races to date.

There were some surprises. Down Under. Moments after the start, a large dog bounded out of the crowd of onlookers and Mad Dog hit it. Neither animal nor car suffered any serious harm. The weather also misbehaved by raining heavily and water poured into the car. The team had to drill holes in the bottom to let it trickle out.

Like all the other cars participating, it has some battery storage. Early in the morning, with the sun low in the sky and weak, the stored electricity helps to turn its single high efficiency electric motor. But under the midday sun, Mad Dog's BP solar cells provide enough power to drive the car and

recharge the batteries. Then, as it sinks and its strength fades, the batteries are needed once more to supplement the fading solar-generated electricity.

You could keep the car going on sunshine through the British summer if you did not drive all day. But you'd put it away for the winter. It has brake lights and indicators but no headlights since sustained night drives are impossible.

Just one kilowatt – enough electrical power for a one-bar electric heater – can keep Mad Dog moving at 50 kmph. This is mainly because of its streamlined shape and lightweight composition. The chassis and skin are made of a "sandwich" material – two thin layers of carbon fibre enclosing a PVC foam filling. It has no structural steel. Engineering lecturer Mike Duke said they had used mostly British components and planned to enter a revamped, more efficient version for the next race. His colleague, Nigel Burgess, uses the project to teach students about stress ana-

lysis. "It's a means of introducing them to this kind of technology – lightweight, with high efficiency – which is going to become more and more important," he said. "It's a bit like building a micro-light aircraft."

No car manufacturer, not

even Honda, has any plans as yet to mass produce a solar car – although as technology advances they may be viable in the tropics within a couple of decades.

But the development of exotic one-offs for the Australian

race, which takes place every three years, should advance techniques for making cars lighter, more efficient and less polluting. Electric cars and hybrid electric/petrol engine vehicles are now close to commercial viability.



Road runner: Mike Duke (above) prepares his team's Mad Dog for The Independent's Nicholas Schoon (top left) to hit the road Photographs: Philip Meech

... and some other oddities for the road



**Steam car:** Steam cars offered serious competition to those with internal combustion engines until the 1920s. They burned petrol which generated steam in a boiler, but you had to raise the pressure before you could switch them on.



**Extreme miles per gallon car:** Every year, strange vehicles compete in the Shell Mileage Marathon to find which can go furthest with a small quantity of petrol. Last year, it was won by a Honda-backed machine which did the equivalent of 5,348 miles per gallon.



**Electric car:** General Motors' sporty EV1 is the world's first commercial electric car. It went on sale in southern California and Arizona last December. Top speed is 145 kmph, with a maximum range between recharges of 150 km.

## St Trinian's swaps hockey sticks for girl power

Rob Brown  
Media Editor

The girls of St Trinian's are poised to stage a return to Britain's screens in a spiced-up television version of the classic Ealing comedies.

Granada Television announced yesterday that it is hopeful of winning a £2.5m commission from ITV to bring the nation's naughtiest schoolgirls back to the small screen next year.

The Manchester-based broadcaster revealed that it is hoping to persuade the all-woman pop group the Spice Girls to perform the theme tune and might even make a bid to get Eddie Izzard to play the cross-dressing headmistress. But it stressed that the series has still to be cast.

Andy Harries, Granada's controller of entertainment and comedy, said: "St Trinian's were the original purveyors of girl power, so it would be wonderful if we could involve the biggest phenomenon in Britpop in their revival."

He stressed that the series would be "saucy but not smutty", so that it could be transmitted in a pre-watershed peak time slot.

St Trinian's was turned into Britain's most famous girls school by a series of feature films made between 1953 and 1965, but Granada has acquired



Sauce and spice: The schoolgirls, seen here in *Blue Murder at St Trinian's*, are to make a television comeback

the rights to the original comic book cartoons by Ronald Searle and says it will draw its inspiration from these.

The announcement was made at the Golden Rose of Montreux Festival on the banks of Lake Geneva in Switzerland, where Britain's leading television comedy and entertainment figures converge each year to compete for awards and drum up advance publicity for their forthcoming productions.

The BBC announced here over the weekend that it has

lured two of ITV's biggest acts away from the commercial sector. Hale and Pace plus Lily Savage have been signed up by the Corporation. Poaching the latter – a drag act by Paul O'Grady – is a major coup since Lily Savage is seen as one of the biggest rising stars in this area of programming.

Hale and Pace, a mainstay of ITV's comedy output for the last decade, are planning to clean up their act when they quit LWT in order to occupy a peak time slot on the BBC.

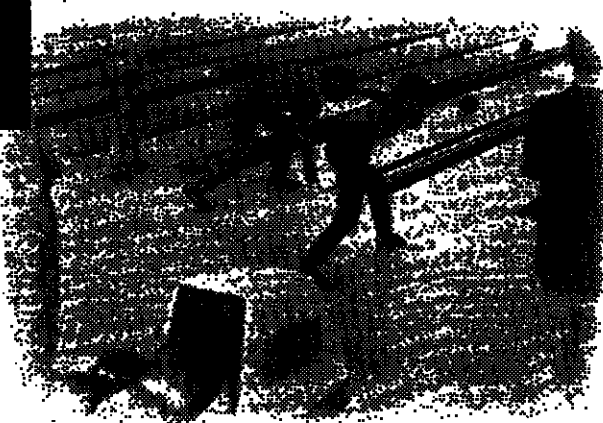
Announcing the signing, Paul Jackson, the Corporation's head of entertainment, said: "They came to us and said they wanted to take their place at the centre of the nation's entertainment with a quite different kind of show."

The defection of both these acts from ITV is a double setback for Britain's biggest commercial station only a week after it was urged by its watchdog body, the ITC, to add more variety to its peak time schedules, which have been dominated by long-running popular drama series. Granada is hoping to generate some more positive publicity for the network with a further major announcement this morning in Montreux. It declined to disclose details last night.

Channel 4 has also been making some waves on Lake Geneva over the weekend by announcing that it has struck a deal with broadcaster Chris Evans' Ginger Productions to make a series about golf entitled Tee-Time, which will seek to cash in on the current craze for the sport, triggered by Tiger Woods' recent stunning triumph at the US Masters.

A golfing fanatic himself, Evans will produce the series, which has a £1m budget. But it has not yet been established how much the maverick presenter will himself feature on screen.

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## news

## Militant gays in protest at cathedral

The gay rights group Outrage yesterday disrupted a cathedral service in a protest at what it said was Anglican support for anti-gay discrimination, writes Mark Rowe.

The campaigners, who had been sitting among the congregation at Southwark Cathedral in London, displayed placards declaring "Stop Sacking Gay Clergy". Dressed in suits and ties, the campaigners had knelt in silence at the altar for five minutes until one rose and told the congregation, including 60 Anglican primates from around the world, that the Church should embrace homosexual equality.

The provost, the Very Rev Colin Slee, said: "My sadness is that the case of homosexual people will not be furthered by causing stress to people who are sympathetic."



Service interrupted: One of the Outrage members protesting at Southwark Cathedral yesterday

Photograph: Thomas Lea

## Dogs face risk from mad cow disease

John Harvey

Government scientists are sitting on six-year-old results from an experiment which shows that dogs can almost certainly catch mad cow disease.

In 1991 Government vets studied the brains of 444 hunting hounds, some of which had been under-performing. The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food confirmed that some of the brains showed signs of the canine equivalent of mad cow disease.

Last week, Norwegian scientists said they thought an 11-year-old golden retriever had died from a spongiform encephalopathy. They are linking the death to pet food made from cattle remains imported from the UK.

Until now, no-one has been able to explain why dogs aren't infected with a spongiform encephalopathy and cats are. At least 75 cats have already died from feline spongiform encephalopathy (FSE), which they probably caught from eating food contaminated with the agent causing BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) in cows.

The hounds may have caught the disease in the same way.

Doctor Stephen Dealler, a consultant microbiologist and persistent critic of the Ministry's policy on BSE, said it was another example of a cover-up. "It's incredible that this experiment was known about before the last General Election," he added.

When *The Independent* contacted Ian McGill — one of the vets who worked on the hounds — he refused to answer our questions. "Why don't you try contacting the Ministry Press Office?" was his response.

A Ministry spokeswoman confirmed that scientists at the Central Veterinary Laboratory and the Veterinary Investigation Service did the work. They found scrapie associated fibrils (SAFs) in some of the brains. Fibrils are little fibres which were first noticed by scientists studying scrapie, a spongiform encephalopathy in sheep.

"You can be absolutely certain that the presence of SAFs shows these dogs had the disease," said Dr Dealler.

In 1992 the results were reported verbally to the Spongiform Encephalopathy Advisory Committee (SEAC) which

advises the Government on BSE policy. The then chairman, Dr David Tyrrell, apparently decided that as the results were unreliable and as there was no danger to public health, the work should not be taken any further.

David Wadsworth, a vet and president of the British Small Animal Veterinary Association, said he had never seen a dog encephalopathy in his practice. "It's certainly news to me, and it's the first I've heard of the Ministry work."

Any dog with the disease will probably have picked it up before September 1990 when the specified bovine offals thought to carry the BSE agent in cattle were banned in pet food.

Because CJD and BSE have comparatively long incubation times — seven years or more — dogs that were puppies in the late 1980s may now be reaching the age when they start to show effects.

**“You can be absolutely certain that ... these dogs had the disease”**

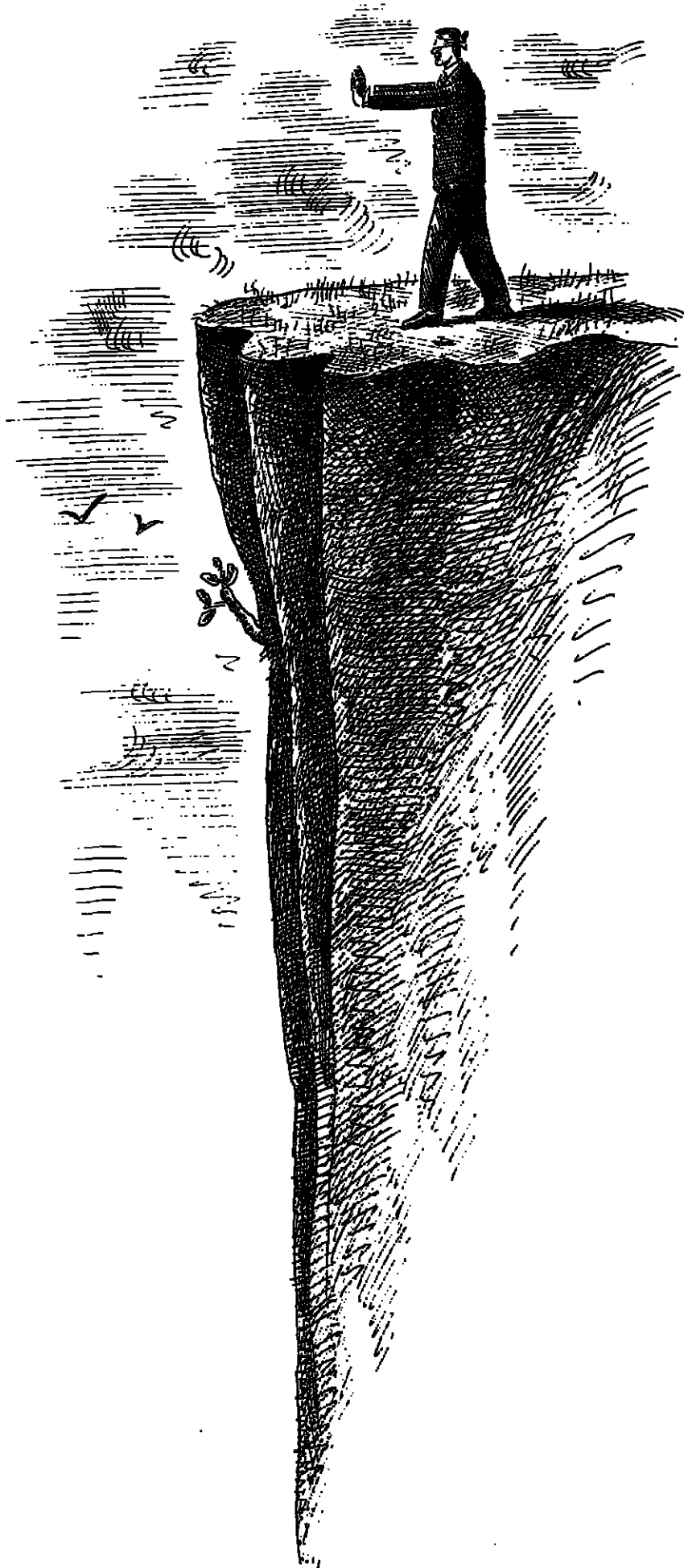
It is possible, also, that the disease in dogs is naturally occurring and not linked to infected meat.

*The Independent* spoke to Mrs Anne Jones, from Hednesford in Staffordshire, who sent a video of her dog to Dr Dealler because she thought it had the disease.

"My dog seems to have recovered, but I'm sure that if you put an advertisement in one of the dog magazines, people would fill the pages with their experiences," she said.

Another incident was reported to David Hinchliffe, Labour MP for Wakefield. "About a year ago, I was contacted by a lady who was convinced several of her dogs had the canine version of BSE," he said. "I put her in contact with some scientists, but I think she may have emigrated since then."

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*John Harvey*



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# Nuclear waste may be used in household products

Ian Burrell

Brussels has cleared the way for radioactive nuclear waste to be used in recycled consumer goods such as glass, plastics and metals. A European Commission directive will allow very low levels of radioactive substances to be handled without reporting or an authorisation licence.

The move was called "lunacy" by environmentalists who said there was no certainty that even the smallest quantities of radioactive material were safe.

The new Euratom directive will permit tiny quantities of the bone-seeking isotope Strontium-90, and 300 other radioactive isotopes, including Plutonium 239 and Caesium 137 to be recycled with other waste.

Dr Chris Busby, author of *Wings of Death*, which highlights the dangers of low-level radiation from the nuclear industry, said that the new thresholds were "dangerously high" and "could allow huge amounts of radioactive waste to be diluted and disposed of by this route".

Seemingly acknowledging the dangers, the directive expressly forbids the addition of radioactive substances in foodstuffs, toys, personal ornaments or cosmetics. But other forms of disposal, including recycling into household goods, are permitted without authorisation if the quantities are below the new given levels. Augustin Janssens, of the EC radiation protection unit, agreed that there was no safe level of radiation but said it was not practical to regulate for very low levels.

The directive was adopted by the EU last summer, and member states are due to transpose

it into their national law by 2000.

In Britain, the use, handling and disposal of even tiny amounts of radioactive substances requires authorisation under the Radioactive Substances Act 1993. Any change would require new legislation passed in Westminster.

Britain's National Radiological Protection Board was involved with the EC in drawing up the new radioactive "exemption levels". Dr John Cooper, head of the NRPB's environmental assessments department, said they had agreed on levels for some 300 isotopes at which the risks to people were "trivial".

He said it would not be practical to impose regulations on university and hospital laboratories which might handle tiny quantities of radioactive materials.

Dr Busby has produced new evidence that children living close to nuclear sites are at risk from leukaemia caused by exposure to low-level radiation. The link has been made in a statistical analysis of mortality rates among children under the age of 15 living in the south Midlands.

The childhood leukaemia mortality rate in South Oxford, which is close to the Atomic Energy Research Establishment at Harwell, is nearly two and a half times the national average. In Newbury, which is near to the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, the figure is almost double the national rate.

The AWE said its research showed the impact of the site on the local environment was "negligible". It said: "We cannot see any link between our operations and the [incidence] of cancer."



Clear glass image: Photo historian Margaret Barker holds an ambrotype dating from about the 1860s during a photo fair in London yesterday

Photograph: Adnan Dennis

## Southall Sikhs attack Muslims in feud

Mark Rowe

A mob of between 40 and 60 Sikhs rampaged through Slough in Berkshire early on Saturday, damaging cars and shops in what police described as the latest clash in an on-going dispute between Sikh and Muslim communities.

The attack happened when the Sikhs, from Southall, west London, drove to Slough late on

Friday night. Members of the gang, some armed with sticks, attacked vehicles and shops in the district of Chalvey, which has a large Muslim population, over a period of one and a half hours after midnight on Saturday morning.

Police were alerted by a series of 999 calls from residents who were awakened up by fighting outside their homes. Police officers who arrived at the scene

were met with a barrage of stones and other missiles and were forced to call for back-up.

Thames Valley Police said, however, that no one was injured during the attacks and that they made no arrests. Up to 86 police officers were involved as the gang members were separated into smaller groups which then left the area by car.

A spokesman for Thames Valley Police said: "This incident

is the latest in a long-running dispute between Sikh and Muslim gangs in the area. Disputes flare up quite often and happen in both Slough and Southall but this was particularly bad," said a spokeswoman for Slough police.

"We liaise closely with police in Southall to try to pre-empt these clashes happening. We are not aware of any specific cause for the fighting - it tends to be

younger members of the community who are involved."

Dr Athar Hussain, acting director of the Asia Unit at the London School of Economics, said that the dispute between the groups was likely to be localised rather than based on religious differences.

"Something on this large scale is fairly new. The Sikhs and Muslims both tend to come from the Punjab so the culture

is quite similar: they eat the same food and speak the same language.

"They usually get on very well in Britain and that suggests the roots of this dispute have more to do with rival gangs than religion."

"Religion only becomes a factor when there is a conflict between the two groups. If there is no dispute then religion is not an issue."

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# It is regretted that Eurostar to any where north of Euston will not now be running

Randeep Ramesh and James Harrison

They can cross the Channel and fly through French countryside but will not make it to Birmingham, Manchester or Glasgow for the foreseeable future.

Eurostar's much-heralded direct services to the North, originally due to start last summer, suffered another setback last week when it emerged that lingering electrical problems have yet to be ironed out.

The problem is that the trains were designed primarily for the French railways. Each is fitted with a pantograph which maintains pressure on the overhead contact wire and provides the train with electricity. The French prefer their pantographs rigid - which damages delicate British overhead lines.

Trains were tested on the line from Welwyn Garden City to Newark earlier this month in an attempt to rectify the problems, but a solution is not expected in time to operate services this summer.

When the Channel Tunnel was opened five years ago, the Government pledged that ser-

vices would be introduced to link Glasgow, Preston, Manchester and Cardiff with Paris and Brussels - but little has emerged.

Eurostar, conscious of that promise, ran an express train to Waterloo. This collected passengers from the north of England and delivered them to the Eurostar terminal. However the connecting service did not catch on and was rarely used by the public. Eurostar withdrew it last December.

There have also been serious snags with the company's £100m sleeper services. All 140 of the hi-tech carriages, billed as "hotels on wheels" replete with showers, vacuum toilets and bedrooms, are lying in sidings at present.

This is due to the inability of the Eurostar's engines to supply enough power for washing facilities and lavatories. If all of them were used simultaneously the train would come to a halt. Eurostar has "indefinitely postponed" the sleepers' introduction.

Insider say that the north of London services were a "sop" by the Government trying to sell the Tunnel to other parts of the

country. "Ministers wanted it done that way to stop people claiming that it was just another load of money for the South-east," said Roger Ford, technical editor of *Modern Railways*. "Nobody in the railways wanted those services."

Businesses in the North are equally dismayed. Earlier this month, Andrew Fletcher, company secretary at British Aerospace in Preston, told BBC Radio's *You and Yours* pro-

gramme that he felt "disappointed" and "somewhat slighted" by Eurostar's failure to run trains north of London.

"The benefit is time saving. Travelling executives could board the train at midnight at, say, Preston and wake up bright and cheerful in Brussels or Paris the following morning. It happens on the Continent every day of the week, so why can't it happen here in the UK?" Eurostar says some services

to the North could run later this year. "To be brutally frank then yes, some electrical work is part of the reasons why the trains are not in service," said a spokesman.

The company has staked its reputation on "trains to the North". Railtrack, the company that owns the nation's track, signalling and stations, was paid £140m by the Government to shave inches from station plat-

forms and increase tunnel diameters in order to accommodate the Eurostar's larger carriage size.

The eventual introduction of the services are unlikely to placate passenger groups. "They stopped the connecting services at the end of last year and there is nothing now," said Graeme Kendrick, secretary of the Midlands Rail Users Consultative Committee. "We were made promises. It is up to Eurostar to keep them."



Indefinite delay: Eurostar has staked its reputation on services beyond London, but the technical problems have still not been solved. Photograph: Paulo Macanico



Halted: £100m sleeper car services. Photograph: Rail

## HALIFAX plc

(Incorporated and registered in England and Wales under the Companies Act 1985 with registered no. 23670761)



Introduction to the Official List sponsored by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell

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Application has been made to the London Stock Exchange for the whole of the ordinary share capital of Halifax plc (the "company"), issued and to be issued, to be admitted to the Official List of the London Stock Exchange (the "Official List"). It is expected that (subject to confirmation by the Building Societies Commission having been received on or before 23rd May 1997) listing will become effective and that dealings in the ordinary shares will commence on Monday 2nd June 1997.

The information contained in this document, which is issued by the company, has been extracted from the listing particulars relating to the company dated 25th April 1997 (the "listing particulars"), in connection with the proposed introduction of the whole of the ordinary share capital of the company to the Official List (the "introduction"). It is intended to supplement, and should be read together with, the Transfer Document, the Summary Financial Statement and the Share Allocation Guide, which have already been sent to qualifying investors and to the company's brokers. Expressions defined in the listing particulars have the same meaning in this document. Copies of the listing particulars, which contain full details of the company, its business and the free shares to be distributed, are available from the places referred to below. Copies of the listing particulars have been delivered to the Registrar of Companies in England and Wales for registration in accordance with section 149 of the Financial Services Act 1986.

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Clerical Medical has funds under management of approximately £16.2 billion as at 31st December 1996 and 1.8 million investment and pension plans in issue as at that date.

Information technology ("IT") and systems

While Halifax's existing IT systems support its current business, Halifax has developed an IT strategy plan which the directors believe will provide the flexibility and functionality that will be required to support the current service ambitions of the Group through to the year 2000 and beyond and reduce the risk of business interruption due to systems or control failure. This strategy will improve both the responsiveness of systems to the changing business and deliver a consistent level of operational service. It is currently estimated that the cost of implementing the IT strategy plan during the three year period to 31st December 1999, which has been and is intended to be funded from internal resources, will be in the region of £250 million.

The directors believe that successful implementation of this major project will provide Halifax with a strong platform from which to compete and develop in the future.

Clerical Medical is undertaking an IT operational services improvement programme which is scheduled for completion by December 1997. This programme is designed, amongst other things, to reinforce Clerical Medical's group-wide control over the implementation of IT strategy and operations.

Strategy

Halifax's strategy is to continue to develop a range of complementary core businesses to establish itself as the UK's leading provider of personal financial services. In pursuing this strategy, the directors are seeking significant earnings growth in the areas of long term savings and protection products and personal lines insurance, whilst further consolidating Halifax's position as the leading UK provider of residential mortgages and holder of retail savings balances.

Halifax intends to build on and develop its strong position in mortgages and liquid savings, but recognises that growth opportunities are also available in its other key areas of activity. Accordingly, while mortgages and liquid savings are expected to remain the largest of Halifax's businesses for the foreseeable future, the directors expect that its key growth areas are likely to be in its non-traditional businesses.

Halifax aims to consolidate its position of residential mortgage market leadership both through organic growth and, where appropriate, by acquisition. Halifax's strategy is to balance market share and profitability objectives in the long term financial year.

In liquid savings, Halifax's strategy is to develop this business through capitalising on the Group's strong brand, large customer base and extensive distribution network. Halifax also aims to develop its retail banking activities, including focusing on the "new to banking" market.

The directors believe that Halifax's leading intermediary in arranging buildings and contents insurance policies in the UK, selling almost exclusively to its mortgage customers. It is the aim of Halifax to develop this business substantially, both by selling to other customers and also by extending its product range.

The directors also believe that there will be increased demand for long term savings and protection products. Halifax's strategy is to develop the strengths of Halifax Financial Services and Clerical Medical, which operate through complementary distribution channels, in order to build a growing share of this market.

Halifax's treasury operations will continue to manage liquidity, raise wholesale funds (including supplementary capital) and provide risk management services to the Group. The strategy is to continue the prudent management of treasury's support functions to the Group's other key business areas, whilst developing a leasing business and expanding and diversifying its commercial lending and investment activities.

The directors believe that Halifax will continue to focus on providing effective and competitive products together with a high level of customer service, whilst managing risk, improving efficiency and continuing to enhance Halifax's strong brand name. They intend that growth will be achieved both organically and by selective acquisitions, where appropriate. Halifax is not currently pursuing any acquisition, although the directors believe that Halifax should have the flexibility to respond rapidly to suitable opportunities, as and where they arise. The directors have not ruled out the option of returning surplus capital to shareholders in the future.

Business development

Clerical Medical

On 31st December 1996, the Group acquired the business of Clerical Medical and General Life Assurance Society which was a key step in the implementation of Halifax's strategy to develop further its long term savings and protection products business. Halifax is obliged to make a contribution to the subsidiary, Clerical Medical Investment Group Limited ("Clerical Medical"), of an amount which, it was estimated, would have been approximately £200 million (including £70 million in respect of share capital) as at 31st December 1996. The total amount to be fully contributed, which has not yet been determined, will reflect the movement in value of the long term assurance business between 31st December 1996 and 31st December 1999.

The directors believe that Clerical Medical is one of the strongest brands for pensioners buying financial products through independent financial advisers, which is the sole distribution channel of Clerical Medical in the UK. The Group's objective for Clerical Medical is to develop it into one of the five largest life offices, in terms of sales (as measured by premium net annual premium) introduced by UK independent financial advisers. Clerical Medical operates as a discrete business within the Halifax Group, in order to maintain its established identity and franchise within the independent financial adviser market.

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The financial information contained in this document does not constitute statutory accounts within the meaning of section 240 of the Companies Act 1985. Copies of the listing particulars are available (during normal business hours on any business day) up to and including vesting day, by telephoning 0990 115 511 and, for collection only, from:

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12 Tokenhouse Yard  
London EC2R 7AN

25th April 1997

## DAILY POEM

### Alice and the Birds

By Anna Crowe

Already she knows the robin, of course;  
the blackbirds - Mr Black and Mrs Brown;  
the glossy starlings and jabbings thrush;  
but she hasn't quite got the hang of - blue-tits, or great-tits?  
Bending over to get them the right way up.

Grandmother, never one to miss  
an educational opportunity, finds her  
the Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Northern Europe.  
Alice stares through her fringe and sifs  
bewilderments of ducks and waders.  
She thumbs through bunting, passerines, accentors.  
Her gaze hops from page to garden,  
and pecks at kitchen-table, bird-table, kitchen-table until  
her eyes glaze and she finds her thumb.  
Questioned, three-year-old wisdom flies to her aid,  
and she opens a page at random -  
hoopoe, cuckoo, bee-eater, kingfisher;  
declares, she'll wait till this bird comes.

And they are coming, Alice:  
bee-eaters zithering the air to honey; kingfisher  
dropping his gift of a weft of fishbones; hoopoe  
to show you how to find buried treasure,  
even in a dung-hill; and cuckoo  
to teach you (before June) her perfect thirds.  
The black-eared wheatear's practising in your ear  
his schwa-schwa-schwa-oo irregular verbs;  
and fan-tailed warbler has sewn you a purse  
of carex sedges with cobweb stitches,  
to keep your dinner-money in.

In flocks and skeins they're travelling, Alice,  
in charm and chattering, razzle, razzle and siege;  
gorgeously-plumed nouns of assemblage  
dazzling, Alice's snow-festivities  
and even blunder eleven-plus papers.  
Exclamations of larks that rise with the sun;  
of plovers, whole congregations; a fall  
of woodcock, upon Surrey, of all places.  
And just when you thought it was over, and time for bed,  
here come flamingoes like a flying sunset.  
Moonrise; a watch of nightingales.

Alice and the Birds has won the £4,000 first prize in the 1997  
Peterloo Poets open competition. The second prize went to  
John Whitworth for *Love & Sex & Boys in Showers*, then Foster,  
third, fourth, fifth and sixth to Abigail Mozley, Iain Foster,  
Alison Spritzler-Rose and Michael Cullip respectively. Anna  
Crowe's first volume, *Skating Out of the House*, is published  
by Peterloo in June.

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# THE INDEPENDENT election '97

## Tories focus on tax in last-ditch attack

Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

In a last-ditch attempt to put the frighteners on the electorate, the Tories are planning to re-focus their campaign on taxation and Labour's alleged threat to increase taxes in a July Budget – the Tories' secret weapon in the 1992 election.

Senior Tories were infuriated by the prediction by Edwina Currie, the former health min-

ister, that the Tories were heading for a landslide defeat, and there was a concerted effort to rubbish her views.

Speaking on Sky TV, Sir Marcus Fox, chairman of the Backbench 1992 Committee, dismissed Mrs Currie as a "loose cannon, firing in all directions ... never hit the target once."

Those close to John Major said he could not be blamed for election defeat after fighting a

tenacious campaign. "He has done all he could. He cannot be blamed," said one of his close allies. His friends believe he will emerge with credit, having been let down by a party suicidally divided over Europe.

Brian Mawhinney, the Tory Chairman, issued a clear message – "don't panic" – to Conservative Party workers in the face of weekend opinion polls showing there could be a Labour landslide.

The campaign will continue to highlight Tory claims that Tony Blair will "sell out" to a federal Europe at the Inter-Governmental Conference in Amsterdam, in spite of the risk that it will remind voters of the deep divisions in the Tory Party.

In a whirlwind tour of the UK today, John Major will highlight what he claims is the Labour threat to the Union. Tony Blair will also be attacked by the Tories, whose polling has shown

that the Labour leader is still not trusted by wavering Tory voters.

Dr Mawhinney said Mr Blair's reassurances to the Labour left in *The Observer* prime minister gave the lie to the image that Mr Blair was "a nice Middle Englander".

But the Tory attack is switching firmly back onto the economy for the final days of the campaign in an attempt to win back wavering Tory voters, who

are threatening not to vote or to switch to Labour.

Tory strategists were still claiming last night that in spite of the opinion polls, their private canvass returns are similar to 1992, and reveal 30 per cent of the voters are "don't knows". But there will be no advertising blitz.

The Tories believe they can still avert defeat by targeting the voters who swung behind the Conservative Party in the last days of the 1992 campaign with

the same taxation threats.

Labour will be focusing on what a fifth Tory term may bring to maximise their vote.

At an election press conference, Michael Portillo, the Secretary of State for Defence, claimed that the shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, had a fully worked out secret tax raising budget which he planned to hand to Treasury officials on Friday if Labour won.

Mr Portillo, one of the lead-

ing Euro-sceptics in the Cabinet rejected as "rubbish" a report that his own Tory leadership campaign was already up and running.

John Redwood, the former challenger for the leadership, has been ultra-loyal in his backing for the Tory election campaign and has ordered his friends to focus on the general election, and not to engage in speculation, even off the record, about the leadership race.

## Labour gets bullish as party polling spells victory

Colin Brown

Labour is going all out for victory on Thursday, ignoring speculation that tactical voting could capture the seats of key Cabinet ministers, including Michael Portillo.

Mr Portillo's seat would be vulnerable to tactical switching by the Liberal Democrats to Labour, but Peter Mandelson, Labour's campaign chief, yesterday rejected talk of tactical voting.

The Liberal Democrat leadership last night also refused openly to encourage tactical voting, although they made clear that they expected it to happen at grass roots level.

Tony Blair will kick off the final week of campaigning today

timist could decide the outcome of the election.

Labour's campaign team is also buoyant with confidence on private polling showing that the issues of education and health, and Tony Blair's personal leadership, are killing the Tories' support.

The Tories dispute Labour's claims, insisting that John Major's personal crusade is showing his strength of leadership. But Labour claimed that Mr Blair's personal lead over Mr Major has increased by 22 per cent since the election began.

Tory divisions over Europe are also contributing to the switch to Labour, according to Labour's polling, which shows that 80 per cent think the divisions are more important than the substance of what they are saying on Europe – a finding at odds with some of the anecdotal evidence in *The Independent's* own survey last week.

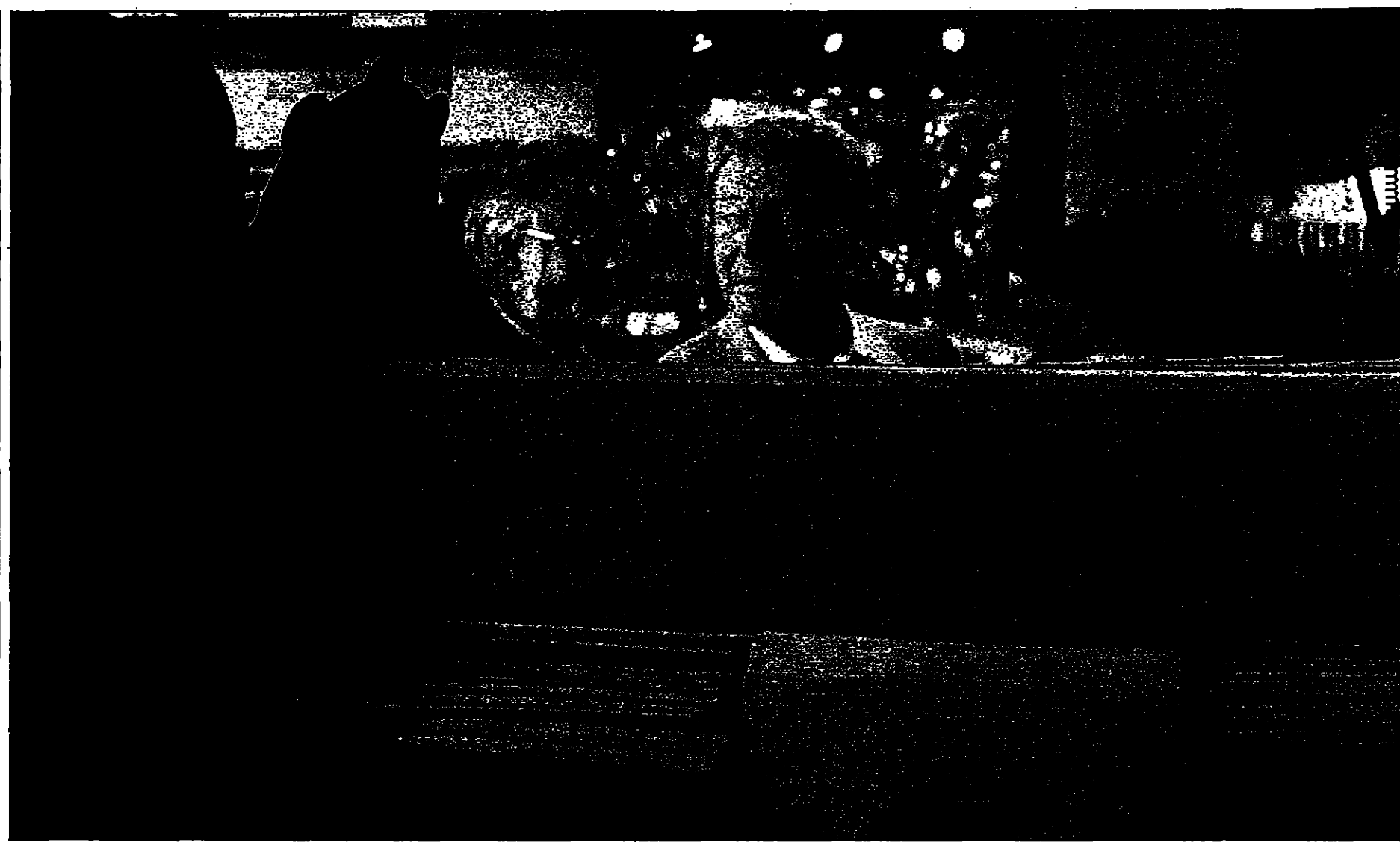
Labour claims it has a 12 per cent lead on "standing up for Britain's interests abroad", with a 19 per cent lead on improving living standards at home. Its polling shows that Labour is winning over younger women.

The Liberal Democrat leadership will today make an explicit appeal to "One Nation" Tories by fielding two Tory defectors, Peter Thurnham and Emma Nicholson, at a press conference to launch the final week of their campaign.

Liberal Democrat strategists claimed Paddy Ashdown's campaign on promises to increase taxes to improve health and education is drawing traditional Labour support in its key seats. "The talk of a Labour landslide is making people feel Labour will be in for a long time and they need Liberal Democrats in Parliament to make a real difference," said one senior Liberal Democrat source.

Labour moved last night to head off an attempt by the Tories to repeat their 1992 "tax bombshell" attack on Labour in the final days of campaigning. Alistair Darling, a Labour treasury spokesman, issued a leaked Tory analysis of their own manifesto, showing that commitments, including the target of reducing the standard rate of income tax to 23p in the pound would cost £9.8m, but the money had not been found.

Mr Mandelson said Labour believes there are between 10 and 15 per cent of "don't knows" still to be won over – half the amount the Tories es-



Child's play: Paddy Ashdown visiting the Children's Book Centre in Kensington, west London, yesterday where he bought a book, *Once Upon a Time*, for his grandson, Matthias. Photograph: John Voss

## Highland heritage infuses Tory trio's appeal to save the Union

Stephen Goodwin

Brave hearts or just brave faces, Messrs Rifkind, Lang and Forsyth sounded defiant yesterday at what could well prove their last public rally together as Scotland's trio of Cabinet ministers. All three face defeat on Thursday if the Armageddon predicted for Scottish Tories in a weekend ICM poll comes to pass.

Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland, was found to be trailing behind Labour in Stirling by a hefty 21 points.

The disclosure seems to have upset Mr Forsyth's political nous. What else can explain his ending the rally with David Steel's ill-judged declaration: "Go back to your constituencies and prepare for Government."

Made to a party conference in 1981, the words haunted the Liberal leader for years. Unless Mr Forsyth succeeds in defying electoral gravity on Thursday – he has a notional majority of just 236 – he will suffer similar ridicule.

The three ministers were led individually to the rostrum at



Bravehearts? Cabinet ministers Malcolm Rifkind, Ian Lang and Michael Forsyth could lose their seats this week if ICM's dire predictions for Scottish Tories come to pass



George Watson's College in Edinburgh by a pipe. On stage they were overshadowed by a blue-handled claymore plunged into a synthetic blood.

This confusing piece of symbolism, Arthurian with a kiln, is one of the Scottish party's election props. The forging of the claymore was shown in a Tory election broadcast, mixing highland heritage with a bright future for Scotland through the swordsmith's high-tech children.

The ministers' theme was that Labour would "surrender" to federalism in the European Union while impoverishing Scotland through a tax-raising parliament in Edinburgh.



Mr Forsyth said he had looked into the possibility of a devolved parliament but could find no answer either to the West Lothian question or how to ensure Scotland continued to benefit from extra public spending.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said the election would be "a referendum on Britain's future". For the first time in its history the Tory party had to appeal to unionists in all parties to join in preserving the best political union the world had ever seen. Mr Rifkind's own political future could be wrecked by a swing to Labour in Edinburgh Pentlands of 4.5 per cent.

Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, said a Scottish parliament would be a "rupture in the Union which could never be repaired and would lead inexorably to both the political and economic belittling of Scotland".

He said Scotland's great days were not those of "your wee bit hill and glen" with cattle getting lost in the bog, but the post-Union intellectual flowering of the Enlightenment and the Empire-building achievements of Scots explorers, missionaries and engineers.

"I don't want to see the Saltire ripped out of the flag of the Union," said Mr Lang, whose own shaky grip on Galloway and Upper Nithsdale could be dislodged by a swing to the SNP of only 2.8 per cent.

### QUOTES OF THE DAY

"We thought we would end on a charming note with our very own divine messenger, or guardian angel."

– Peter Mandelson, talking at the preview of Labour Party's final election broadcast, which features an angel.

"I had hoped to bring down the overall level of taxation. I have not managed to bring down the overall level of taxation. If you wish to call that a 'breach' – correct, I will accept that I have not been able to achieve what I hoped to."

– John Major

"My hands are clean, – Mohammed Sawar, Labour candidate in Govan, where there has been a late surge in voter registrations."

"After May 1 there will be a bloodbath in the Tory party."

– Edwina Currie

"This sounds like the outburst of a grieving woman."

– Foreign Office minister Jeremy Hanley on Edwina Currie.

"I know nothing of the story, I regard it as a drive."

– Defence Secretary Michael Portillo on reports that he is leading a post-election Tory leadership challenge.

"The Liberal Democrats' relative honesty about the cost of their pious brand of fantasy government is to be applauded."

– Sir Bernard Ingham

"I do not want to see the saltire ripped out of the flag of the Union."

"That is the flag under which we have become respected throughout the world."

– Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade.

"It seems to be going on for ever and ever."

– Tony Blair

Compiled by Sam Coates

### TOMORROW

Andrew Marr:



What is new Labour?

with warnings about the threat of a fifth Tory term with a press conference claiming that the Tories would break up the NFIS. That is likely to lead to renewed howls of protest from the Tories, who are still fuming over Labour claims last week that they would abolish the state pension.

Labour strategists will shrug off complaints that the campaign has been too negative, and turns off voters. They are relying on private polling evidence showing they are heading for an overall majority, irrespective of whether "don't-knows" go back to the Tories.

Mr Mandelson said Labour believes there are between 10 and 15 per cent of "don't-knows" still to be won over – half the amount the Tories es-

### political shorts

#### Heseltine and Prescott clash in live TV debate

The Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, and Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, traded verbal blows yesterday in a live television debate between the deputy leaders of all three main political parties. The sparks started to fly after Mr Heseltine levelled a direct accusation against Mr Prescott of "lying" about Tory proposals on retirement pensions.

The debate – the only one of its kind throughout the whole election campaign – came on BBC1's *On The Record* and also included Liberal Democrat deputy leader Alan Beith.

#### Candidate sent blades in post

Razor blades were sent to an election candidate in hate mail from animal rights extremists, North Yorkshire police said yesterday. An envelope containing the blades, and what police described as an "offensive message", was posted to the campaign offices of a candidate in North Yorkshire, who is not being named and was not an MP at the last election.

#### Campaign workers arrested

Two Labour campaign workers have been arrested and suspended from the party following an attack which left a man in hospital with head and facial injuries. The incident occurred as party workers were handing out balloons in the High Street of Brierley Hill in Dudley, West Midlands, on Saturday.

## Mandelson defends film's angelic vision

Colin Brown

Old film buffs may find a comforting similarity with the final message from New Labour in the party's final election campaign broadcast tonight which features an angel.

A winged taxi-driver, played by screen star Peter Preuthwaite, shows a father, Tom, and his daughter, Becky, how bad life could be under a fifth Conservative Government, where it never stops raining, and they have to wait six hours for treatment in a hospital accident and emergency unit.

The idea of the angel may well have been borrowed from the 1946 Hollywood movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*, a "weepee" often repeated at Christmas, in which James Stewart, playing a suicidal drunk, is shown by an angel called Clarence what life

could be like without him.

Both films have a happy ending, with the Labour *PEB* offering voters the chance to avoid the dire future coming to pass. When it screened in a preview last night, it was met by titters from hard-hearted political correspondents.

It is likely to be criticised as a negative end to a negative campaign, and for failing to offer any real glimpse of what life would be like under Labour, except that the sun is shining.

Peter Mandelson, Labour's campaign chief, defended the film and denied it carried a negative message.

"We thought we would end it (the campaign) on a charming note with our own divine messenger or guardian angel ... Angels are switchers."

Mr Preuthwaite, who was

the band leader in the hit film *Brassed Off*, and also played a murdering sergeant in the TV series *Sharpe*, gave his services free of charge.

The Liberal Democrat leader, Paddy Ashdown, last night in contrast to Labour's angel ended his party's final election broadcast by reinforcing the Liberal Democrat manifesto commitments to increase taxes to pay for higher spending on education, a referendum on Europe, and a promise of more nurses and doctors in the NHS.

Liberal Democrat leaders claim they are winning over voters with their more positive campaign. There are rumblings in the Labour camp about the "safety first" nature of Labour's campaign, although those will be silenced if Labour win by a landslide.

## Fayed helicopter transports Blair

Matthew Brace

Tony Blair yesterday flew from London to Derby in a helicopter owned by the proprietor of Harrods, Mohamed Al Fayed, the man at the heart of the "cash for questions" allegations.

Three weeks ago, the Labour leader threw his campaign schedule into chaos to avoid a potentially embarrassing meeting with Mr Fayed by refraining from boarding his campaign helicopter at Battersea Heliport in south London until the Harrods supreme had landed in his and been whisked away.

Mr Blair's delay that day came when his press secretary, Alastair Campbell, spotted two photographers on the tarmac. They had learned that Mr Fayed's aircraft was due to land from his estate in Boxed, Surrey, just as Mr Blair was due to

board his Cab Air Squirrel bound for a meeting with children at a school in Redditch, Hereford and Worcester.

A senior Labour source said at the time: "Their eyes lit up and we realised that a meeting could have been misconstrued."

However, yesterday Mr Blair was flying high in a Fayed-owned machine. The Labour leader and his wife Cherie flew from Battersea Heliport to Derby on another leg of his campaign trail.

A Labour source said yesterday that a leasing company, Jet Air, hired the machines which were owned by other people, and one belonged to Harrods. The source insisted that Mr Blair had been unaware of who owned the helicopter and said that it had not been decorated in the Harrods green and gold livery.

Apr 28 1997



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# Blair attacks Tory 'policy of rejection'

Judith Judd reports from Labour's education summit

John Major's promise of a grammar school in every town means four or five secondary moderns in every town, Tony Blair, the Labour leader, said yesterday.

Mr Blair used Labour's first education summit of experts to remind voters that education was his top priority.

"We are in the final phase of the general election campaign and I want to start the final week as I began the first week - by focusing on New Labour's absolute commitment to raising standards in education for all our children," he said.

On Conservative plans for selection, he challenged the Prime Minister to say which school would be the grammar school in each town and which would be the secondary moderns.

"Mr Major calls it a policy of rejection. I call it a policy of rejection for the many," he said. Nobody had spelled out the funding implications for those schools which would be turned into secondary moderns.

Labour sources said that the summit, at a hotel in London, aimed to emphasise the distinction between the Conservative preoccupation with grammar schools and Labour's determination to raise standards by learning from existing examples of good teaching.

David Blunkett, shadow Secretary of State for Education, told the gathering of head teachers, academics and business leaders that there would be more such summits if Labour won the election.

"The challenge is to continue listening, learning and reflecting once in government," he said, arguing that there was a compelling need to change cultural attitudes to education. "If we can

encourage people to understand that education is better than winning £1m on the lottery because it carries people forward as successful individuals, then we can transform society."

Labour has promised a fresh start for failing schools which would be closed and reopened with a new headteacher and some new staff.

Sue Pearson, head of Lache Infants School, Chester where 70 per cent of children have free school meals, described how she had inherited a school with low expectations of both achievement and behaviour.

She had abandoned the method of teaching reading which is most common in primary schools - listening to each child read in turn every day.

Instead, she had introduced a reading hour in which children read in groups and were taught phonics, grammar, spelling and comprehension. The percentage of seven-year-olds reaching the expected level in reading had risen from 50 per cent in 1995 to 85 per cent last year.

Labour plans to set national targets for literacy and numeracy for all 11-year-olds. Mr Blair asked local authority officers what happened to schools in their areas which did not reach their targets.

Professor Tim Brighouse, Birmingham's chief education officer, said that in his city - where primary schools had just set their own targets for achievement - they were aiming to raise the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level at 11 from 50 per cent to 72 per cent in the year 2000.

"If they don't reach those targets, don't ask what to do with teachers in schools - sack the chief education officer," he said.



Worth more than a £1m Lottery win: Tony Blair and David Blunkett call for a complete culture change in public attitudes towards education

Photograph: David Rose

## Call to let teachers into education debate

Lucy Ward  
Education Correspondent

A new Labour government must avoid falling into the same trap as the Tories of allowing prime ministerial interference in education policy, head teachers' leaders warned yesterday.

The general secretary and the president of the Secondary Heads Association, speaking at the union's conference in Torquay, both attacked the present government for placing the needs of the education system second to political dogma and party advantage.

The new Labour Party, showing signs of favouring a presidential style of government "reminiscent of the Iron Lady in her heyday" if elected on 1 May, risked letting spin doctors speak louder than schools in the education debate, said SHAs general secretary John Sutton.

Mr Sutton likened the prime minister's office to a lighthouse beam sweeping the sea and focusing at any one moment on one area of government. The beam has been shining on education for some time, bringing the advantages of a high public profile and plenty of debate, but the disadvantages of "distortions of policy which derive from those different political imper-

atives which emanate from Downing Street." The effect was to create policies which "derive from partisan dogma or from assessment of political advantage, neither of which necessarily relate to the real needs of the education system."

The SHAs leaders called on the next government to move quickly to re-examine funding in secondary schools. Mr Sutton said: "If the next secretary of state is disposed to let the voices be heard, he will hear the clearest of messages, the Churchillian plea: Give us the tools and we will do the job."



Jim Davidson: Masterful purveyor of blue jokes, but whether he can help the true-blue cause is a moot point

## Fame game could make all the difference on the big day

Louise Jury

So, you say, as you stand in your polling-booth on Thursday. What is the clinching factor here? Tax? Europe? The NHS?

Or will you say "I must vote for Mr Blair because any man backed by Ben Elton and Richard "Victor Meldrew" Wilson is the one for me. Even though Mick Hucknall's another one and his love songs make me want to vomit."

It's obvious. Isn't it? Celebrity endorsements are a curious matter. Sean Connery may be handsome, but would anything less than a personal canvassing session convert even

the biggest female fan to Scottish Nationalism? Comic Jim Davidson is true blue but the description is normally applied to his jokes, not his politics. As he strolled the streets with National Heritage Secretary Virginia Bottomley, did she really consider him an electoral asset?

Tony Robinson is a terribly nice man who plays a stupid, smelly character, Baldrick. Does being television's Mr Downtrodden help highlight policies for the poor and disadvantaged? Well, maybe.

Research by the advertising agency Bates Dorland indicated that with the two main parties sounding so alike, endorsements by a favourite star can count.

So let's take another look. In

the red corner stand Anita Roddick, Sir Terence Conran and arch-lavvie Lord Attenborough. If you're a film-loving gourmand who worries whether rabbits have died in the cause of kissable lips, Labour is obviously for you.

The blue corner boasts Frank Bruno, Lord Lloyd-Webber and (some of) the Spice Girls. There must be times when John Major rolls his eyes to the ceiling in despair.

Is it strictly necessary, he must ponder, for Paul Daniels to sing the Tories' praises and speak of emigrating should Mr Major not get back in? Could this not prove Labour's biggest asset? Vote Blair and banish all irritating magicians forthwith.

Friendship is a fine thing but

someone should have told Neil Hamilton that Bill Roache, aka *Coronation Street's* Ken Barlow, was passé. Given the rival soaps ratings, he needed Joe Nicholls, the Labour-voting stud in *EastEnders*. Sir Peter Ustinov and John Cleese both have fine senses of humour. They back Paddy Ashdown and the Liberal Democrats.

Sir James Goldsmith has support from the millionaire zoo owner John Aspinall and a Referendum Party candidate in the genital, eccentric, television naturalist David Bellamy. Yet surely a madcap willingness to hack through hostile terrain is no preparation for life in Parliament.

Except now you come to mention it...



Tony Robinson: Plays a malodorous, cerebrally challenged character, but could be an electoral asset

## Tory battles echo past strategies

Q. It's Labour's view that they lost the election with your "tax bombshell" stuff.

A. Yes. I think they did. It goes even further back than that. We knew they had a very good strategy, put simply - the Tories have failed. It's time for a change. It's very compelling. But we came up with something even more compelling - it's not time to change, it could be worse, you can't trust Labour. And we stressed higher tax, both because people don't like paying it, but also because in a recession people sense that higher taxes are not a brilliant way out.

It's usually best to ignore things if you possibly can. We deliberately ran a totally negative campaign from October '91 onwards - and we never departed from it.

Q. So, did you have any deviations from your chosen policy? Tax, tax, tax and nothing else.

A. No. We had one small wobble. After the shadow Budget we had a few dangerous days, where we started responding - which was a terrible mistake.

Q. You shouldn't respond to your opponent?

A. No. Not at all. Because you want to control the agenda. And our agenda was tax. I'm modestly proud of the fact that when people came out of the polling booths and listed their reasons for voting Tory, the first was Kinnock and the second was tax. We put it there.

Q. You scarcely went for Kinnock.

A. We did one vicious section in a broadcast. One real personal attack on a scale that had never been done before. It was really, really nasty.

Q. Do you regret it?

A. Oh no, not at all. We were

The following are extracts from the interview with the senior Tory strategist discussing the party's battleplan for the 1992 election - a plan which bears remarkable similarities to the present campaign

saying you can't trust him, he changes his mind all the time.

Q. But he's in a no-win situation. If he'd stuck with old policies, you'd have murdered him. But you also attack him for changing them.

A. Yes. That's the price he had to pay. The vice of his virtues, if you like. You see, I think the public was logical. They saw what Labour was saying about tax, and they didn't want to pay it, and they also thought it would do them no good.

You must remember this, we went into this election in a different situation from any Tory campaign since the war.

The message is normally [that] the Tories have delivered prosperity, don't throw it away. But this time, it wasn't possible to say that. The Tories had completely fucked it up. It was disaster-time. So the only thing we could say was - it might be worse. Of course people in the party were tempted, they wobbled, they said all the time can't you stress this government's positive achievements? But I'm pleased to say that John Major, Patten and Maurice Saatchi were all against that. And stayed against it. We stayed negative from beginning to end.

Q. I know what Labour feared. What I'd like to know is, what was yours?

A. I'm not going to tell you. Q. Could Labour have done something which would have frightened you?

A. Oh yes. Oh yes. In fact we worked out a scenario of how they might attack us and what we would do.

Q. What was it?

A. I won't tell you that. I can't.

Q. It was an aspect of your economic failures ...?

A. That's right. [Labour will] never win till they convince people they can handle the economy better than us. You must never hesitate to find glee in bad economic news.

You see, I think Labour lost because they weren't logical. That's why I do this work - I love it because it's so logical. Quite intelligent people write

about these matters and yet they don't see that most political campaigns are insufficiently ruthless in logic. They are not simple or clear. You can get one thing across. It must not be dealt with in an unclear or sloppy way.

Whereas Labour, you know, tried to have it both ways. They hadn't thought the logic of it through.

Q. I couldn't work out if John Major's campaign was deliberately off all on its own.

A. No, I'm interested you say that. It wasn't meant to be.

But, again, that may be what came across.

Q. The press were in agony. A. Well, how do you think he felt? It's so awful for him.

Q. Doesn't he enjoy it?

A. You must be mad.

Q. Your problem with John Major presumably was you'd chosen to run a negative campaign. And he couldn't be seen to be running it.

A. Precisely. So, it was hard to know what to do with him. But I think the last week was important. The Union.

Q. That was a political instinct.

A. Entirely. And entirely his. The Conservatives are always comfortable defending the flag.

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# Voters say Tory scare tactics are a failure

**Kim Sengupta**

A poll which claims to be the most sophisticated barometer of voters' opinions yesterday indicted Conservative policy.

The poll, which followed a cross-examination of Kenneth Clarke, Gordon Brown, and Malcolm Bruce by a panel of 300 voters, showed the Tories had failed in their scare tactics to portray Labour as "demon-eyed" punitive taxers. At the same time a dramatically increasing number would like to see the Liberal Democrats in a coalition government.

The panel was first polled in January and then yesterday afternoon at the end of a week-end seminar on the economy. Results indicate that the number who thought a Labour government would bring in high taxes has fallen from 57 per cent to 47 per cent and the proportion who thought people earning £50,000 and more should pay more taxes has gone up from 66 per cent to 89 per cent.

On voting intentions on Thursday, the Tory figure fell from 26 per cent to 19 per cent. Labour also fell, from 47 per cent to 39 per cent. The clear winners were the Liberal Democrats, who rose from 11 per cent to 33 per cent. The figures for those who thought the economy would be much better off if the Lib Dems were part of a new government shot from 21 per cent to 44 per cent.

Mr Clarke was taken aback by the rough reception he was given by the panel during the recording of a state-of-the-nation programme by Channel 4.

This was in marked contrast to Mr Brown and Mr Bruce, who were listened to in respectfulness. Afterwards the Chancellor stated that he was surprised "by the level of hostility" he faced.

Mr Clarke had claimed Britain had become "a



Single-handed: Mohammed Sawar campaigning yesterday outside his headquarters in Govan. The constituency is wracked by faction-fighting

# Ballot-rigging claims muddy Govan fight

**Labour candidate denies fraud, writes Stephen Goodwin**

The studied calm displayed by Mohammed Sawar, the Labour candidate, as the poison has flowed in Glasgow's faction-ridden Govan constituency this last year is starting to desert him after suggestions that he and his supporters have tried to rig the ballot.

"My hands are clean," Mr Sawar insisted at the weekend as Strathclyde police continued investigations into the extraordinary number of late entries to Govan's electoral roll.

Out of 484 last-minute applications across Glasgow's nine constituencies, 279 came from Govan where Mr Sawar, a self-made millionaire, is facing not only a by-election style challenge from the Scottish National Party but candidates with personal axes to grind.

William Johnston, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) called in the police last week after disallowing seven Govan applications. Since then it has emerged that 200 of the new voters are Asians in Pollokshields East, the ward represented by Mr Sawar on Glasgow city council.

The scandal, as Mr Sawar pointed out, is not the high number of late entries but the fact that residents were not on the roll in the first place. "The ERO says he is alarmed at the 279, but why is he not alarmed at the numbers missing from the register? It is shameful to suggest that helping people to register is in any way an organised fraud to rig the ballot."

People who should have been getting information in Urdu or Hindi on how to register might now fear from the actions of the ERO that to do so could bring the police to their door with a charge of fraud, Mr Sawar told *The Independent*. The Sawar camp make no bones about encouraging people to enrol. Forms were published in the party's newsletter and activists filled in details on doorsteps but they say citizenship rules were explained.

"I don't feel guilty if there are 279 late entries," Mr Sawar said. "I wish there were 679 or 1,079. If somebody is involved in fraud they should be prosecuted. But the seven could be mistakes. It is bizarre. What is the scandal when still in Govan, five to 10 per cent of the people are not on the electoral roll?"

Raised in a hut 15 miles from Faisalabad in Pakistan, Mr Sawar came to Scotland 20 years ago and from a corner shop built up a cash-and-carry business with an £85m turnover. He won his council seat in a formerly safe Tory ward in 1992 and now, aged 44, is poised to become Britain's first Muslim MP.

But he has made enemies on the way. His selection a year ago in a bitter contest with Mike Watson, MP for the disappearing seat of Glasgow Central, split the party. The ballot had to be re-run after a dispute over postal votes and eight Watson-supporting party officers quit their posts.

Two of the record 10 candidates standing in Govan - Peter Paton, Unofficial Labour, and Zahid Abbasi, Independent Conservative - are friends of Abdul Huq, the father of two girls Mr Sawar "rescued" last year in a high-publicity dash to Pakistan. Mr Huq, who was alleged to have abducted the Glasgow-born girls and forced them into marriage, is suing Mr Sawar in the Scottish courts.

Another Pakistani, Bador Islam, is standing as a Labour Independent. Though no friend of Mr Huq's, he claims Mr Sawar's rescue mission brought "shame" on the Asian community.

Mr Sawar's vociferous opposition to Indian control of Kashmir is said to be behind approaches to friends and political associates with offers of up to £250,000 for sexual gossip to smear the would-be MP.

The constituency has changed from the Govan won twice by the SNP in by-elections. Within its redrawn boundaries are the archetypal tenements of Govan proper, streets of Asian-owned shops and the detached villas of Maxwell Park, Glasgow's poshest enclave.

Nicola Sturgeon, the feisty young SNP candidate, talks of a "cloud of suspicion" over the late entries to the roll. The SNP have courted the Asian vote - about 7 per cent of the constituency - through their own organisation, Scots Asians for Independence.

Ms Sturgeon, a 26-year-old solicitor, could be the ultimate beneficiary of the affair. The police investigation is expected to take weeks, with hundreds of people to interview. But if wrong-doing emerges and the ballot has to be re-run, Ms Sturgeon's vigorous campaigning could pay off.

## HOW I WILL VOTE: RICHARD WILSON



### I simply don't believe the Conservatives

**Wilson: Gap between the rich and poor is too great**

**How will you be voting Labour?**

**Why?**

The main reason I joined the Labour Party was because I believed the gap between the rich and the poor was too great. When I joined, I myself was very poor, and now I'm not, and I just feel the gap is too great.

I also have a fundamental belief that, if we're talking in terms of trust, I don't trust the Conservative Party. I simply don't believe that they are concerned about society in general.

**What issues are important to you?**

Tony Blair has said that he is concerned about "education, education, education" and that for one thing is something I feel very strongly about. As rector of Glasgow University, I'm also made aware the whole time of the hardships students are suffering. Although the Conservatives are constantly crowing about the fact that there are more people going to university, I'm also aware that a lot of those students are finding it very difficult to make ends meet, and many of them are going to end up with large debts. And now they're now talking about putting fees on to learning - in addition to the cost of subsistence.

I believe that as many people should be able to get to university as possible, and I just see them becoming more and more elitist. There is also a chronic shortage of books and equipment in schools and universities. I'm constantly being asked to send things for auctions at these places, to raise some money because the buildings themselves are falling down.

I've come back from the Philippines, where I've been helping Voluntary Services Overseas, for which I am an ambassador. My politics make me feel that we should be responsible not only for our own people, but also people in the Third World. When you see the poverty in places like the Philippines, it's rather daunting.

**Do you think you should have to pay more taxes?**

I am prepared to pay more taxes, and I think that there are many like me who should.

**Which politicians do you admire?**

I have to say that the Labour front bench looks very promising, and whatever happens they deserve a shot. I admire Tony Blair's courage in trying to turn around the party. I think Gordon Brown knows his onions - all in all it is a very Scottish line-up, of which I approve. Glenda Jackson is my MP in Hampshire, where she's doing a very good job. I'm also a supporter of Claire Short, and agree with her maverick qualities.

Having said that, I wouldn't like to do their jobs. I'm often asked whether or not I would like to be a politician, and the answer is no. When I look at the almost Gestapo-like questioning of the front bench, it frightens the wits out of me. I don't consider myself an expert, but I am interested in politics, as we all should be.

**Sam Coates**

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# The next government faces a formidable challenge in revitalising the NHS, which has become The truth about health: An ailing

**THE INDEPENDENT**  
The truth about health  
How The Independent reported the health issue last week

The six people who tell their stories on this page show the National Health Service in a grim light. Each has a different perspective but all testify to the growing pressures on the service. Their experience stands as an indictment of the parties who have, so far in this election, almost completely ignored the NHS's plight. Together they present the next government with a formidable challenge.

On cancer, the elderly, emergency care, expensive drugs and waiting lists, the service is failing to meet the need, as their evidence shows. These are the key pressure points for the NHS and it is on these that the new government will be judged.

By 2015, one in two of the population will develop cancer at some point in their lives. The disease is becoming increas-

ingly common, only partly accounted for by the ageing of the population. Professor Karol Sikora, clinical oncologist at Hammersmith Hospital and medical director of the Imperial Cancer Research Fund estimates that 15,000 people die of cancer unnecessarily each year because they do not get the best treatment. Three years ago, Sir Kenneth Calman, the government's

chief medical officer, published plans for re-shaping cancer services to provide 30 major centres with up to 300 cancer units in general hospitals. The idea was to concentrate expertise and raise standards.

Professor Sikora said: "The aim was to provide the same quality of care wherever you live - a sort of oncological McDonald's. The problem now is implementation in an in-

creasingly fragmented, competitive and dispirited NHS. At the end of the day any improvement is going to cost money."

He estimates an extra £100m is needed to refurbish buildings with a further £100m a year to run them. "The politicians want it, the professionals want it and we have done an awful lot of talking about it. Now we need the resources to get some action."

The NHS is withdrawing from care of the elderly as it has withdrawn from dental and optical care. The 45,000 beds available for long-term care in 1990/91 have fallen to about 27,000, a 40 per cent cut in five years. An estimated 9,000 acute hospital beds are blocked at any one time by elderly patients who cannot be discharged because the shortage of community care means there is nowhere for

them to go. Last month, the all-party Health Select Committee called for a return to free nursing care for the elderly which the Government said would cost £180m.

Christine Hancock, general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing which proposed the move, said the public could not understand why it should cost hundreds of pounds a week in a home but be free in

## THE CONSULTANT'S TALE

### Drugs cash curbs may cause deaths

Dr Stephen Nussey, consultant endocrinologist at St George's hospital in Tooting, south London, says the refusal of health authorities and GP fundholders to pay for expensive drugs is causing unnecessary suffering and may have contributed to patient deaths.

"I had a 45-year-old patient who suffered from increasing confusion, poor memory and involuntary movements of his left arm and leg," he said.

"A brain scan showed a very large tumour in his pituitary gland. He had major surgery, but 21 days after the operation he was still drowsy, bed-bound and refusing to co-operate with the nurses."

"He was started on growth hormone and within a week he was transformed, walking round the ward and taking an active interest in his surroundings. He was discharged after two months."

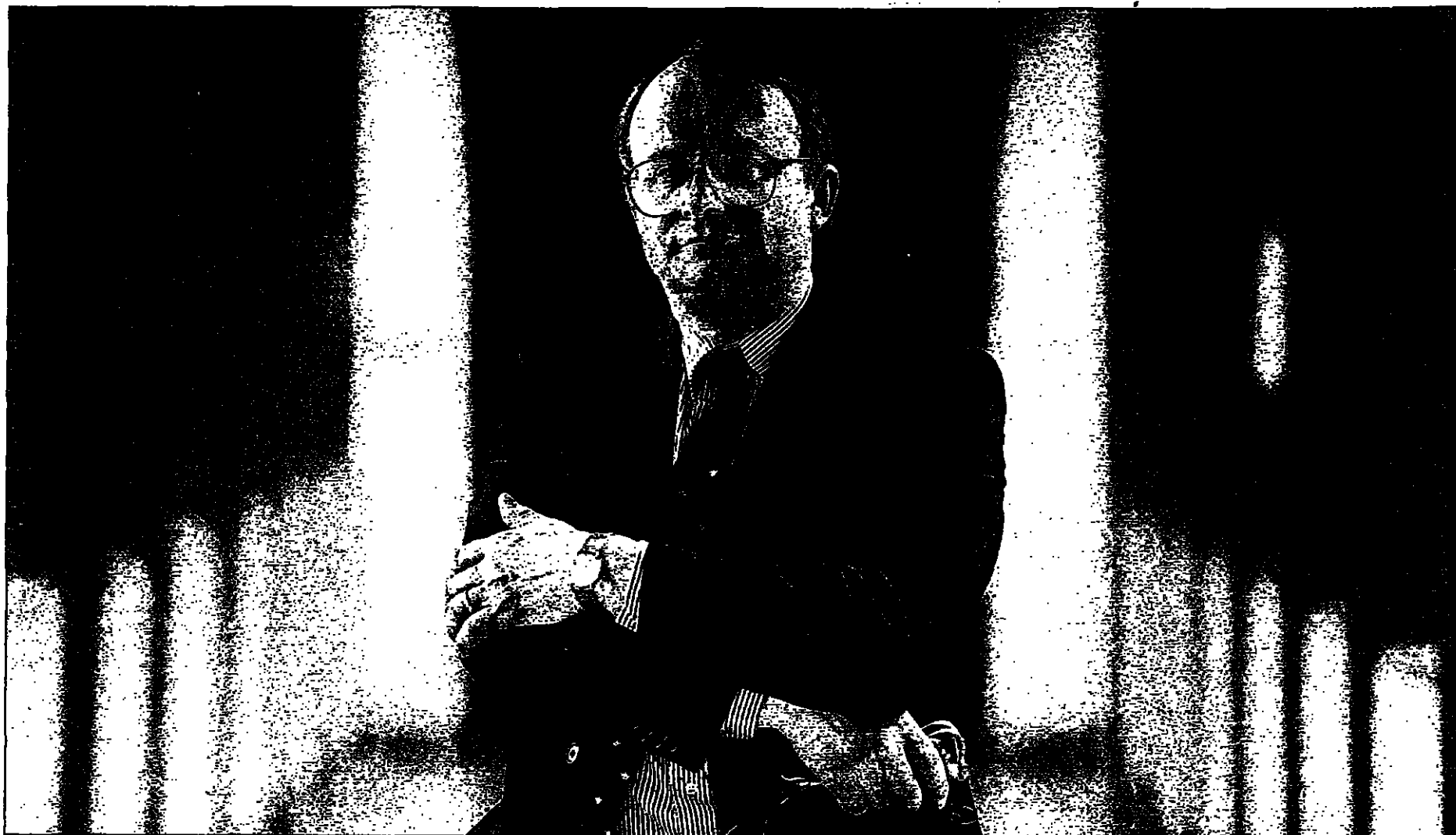
"His GP, a fundholder, wrote to the health authority asking it to pay for the hormone, which costs up to £10,000 a year."

"The GP said he was unwilling to spend 1/200th of his entire drug budget on one patient without additional help."

"The health authority refused and the growth hormone was stopped. The patient deteriorated markedly, especially mentally, and died at home five months after his operation."

"I cannot say the patient died because the hormone was withdrawn. But some patients are not getting hormone treatment despite clear benefits and the GP's letter makes it clear the decision is entirely financial."

"Health authorities are in effect saying 'Yes, you can be treated for a pituitary tumour but if you survive it doesn't matter what your quality of life is like'."



Concerned professional: Dr Stephen Nussey, who says decisions on whether patients are given expensive drug treatment are entirely financial

Photograph: Philip Meek

## THE CASUALTY PATIENT'S TALE

### 17-hour wait for hospital bed

The local GP sent an ambulance to collect Margaret Cunningham, 62, after her grand-daughter, Simone, phoned to say she had been vomiting and had pains in her face and back. It was 17 hours before she was admitted to a hospital bed.

They arrived at North Manchester General hospital casualty department at 10.30am and Mrs Cunningham, a diabetic, was put on a trolley in a corridor. "She was in a lot of pain and she just wanted to lie down," said Simone, 22.

At 2pm she was moved to a chair in a cubicle because the trolley was needed for another patient. The bandage on her foot ulcer had come off but six hours later, when it had still not been re-dressed, Simone asked for a fresh bandage and did it herself.

At 10.30pm she was put back on another trolley because there were no beds. At midnight staff told her she was being transferred to Halifax across the Pennines. An ambulance arrived at 1.30am and she finally found a hospital bed at 3am.

Simone, who stayed with her grandmother, said: "She was very distressed. It made her worse. At Halifax she was diagnosed with pneumonia and put on two lots of antibiotics. My granddad had to hire a car to see her which cost £75."

"I'm not blaming the staff, they did the best they could. It's more the Government's fault than the hospital's. There are not enough beds and there is not enough money."



Back home: Margaret Cunningham with her great-granddaughter, Stacey Photograph: Newsaram

## THE GP'S TALE

### Practice bears brunt of two-tier service

In Montgomeryshire, all the GPs are fundholders except for the four partners who run the health centre in Llanfair Caereinion, who stayed out of the scheme because they believed it would create a two-tier service.

Their worst fears have been realised. As a result of their principled stand, their 4,500 patients face the longest waits of 18 months to two years for routine surgery at the local Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, while those from neighbouring practices are treated at the same hospital in an average of three months.

Dr Tony Evans, one of the partners, said: "This week a man who has been waiting over two years for an operation on his prostate had it postponed again."

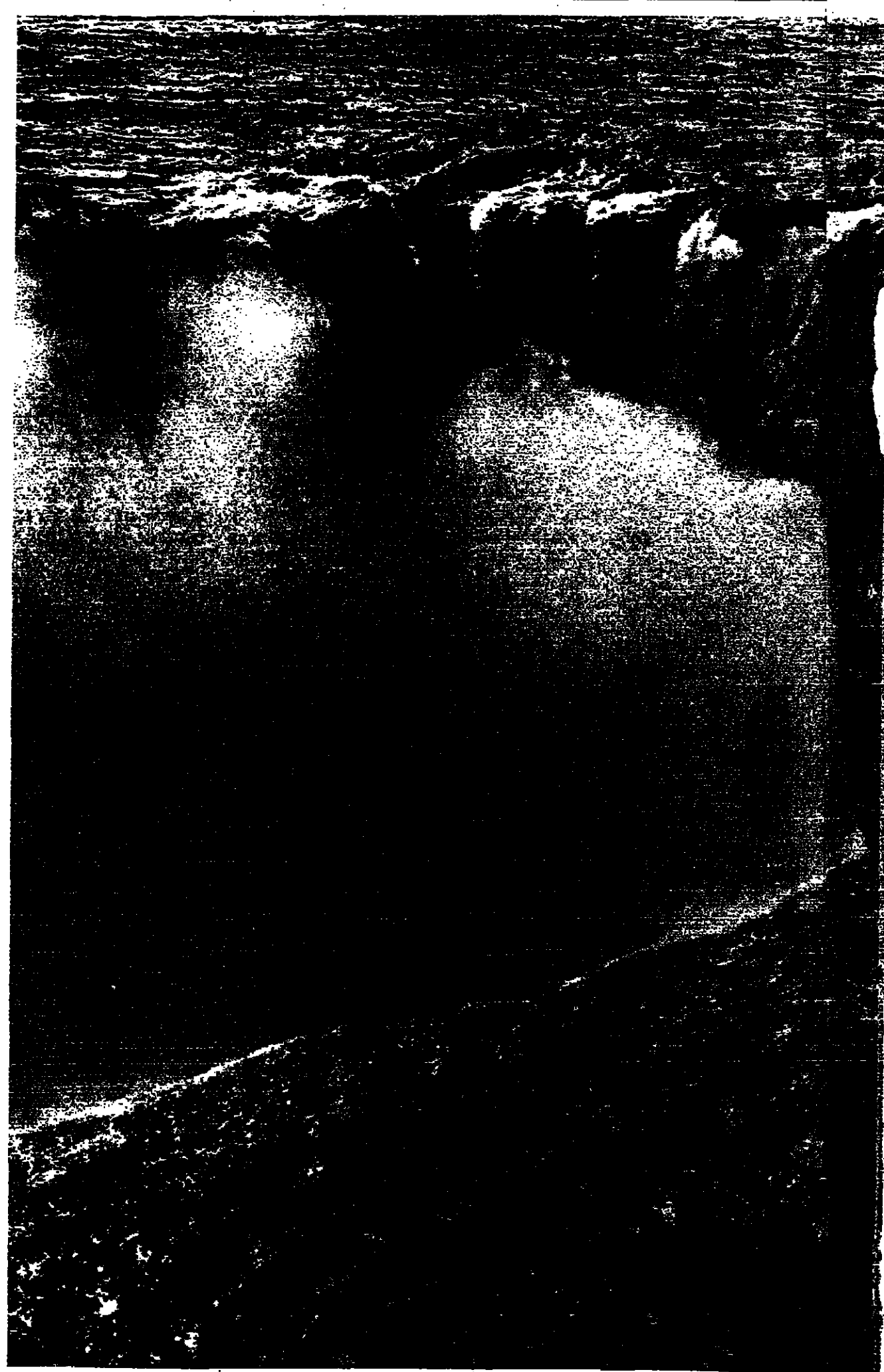
The hospital would not allow that to happen to a fundholder's patient because it would be breaking their contract. The patient is extremely angry. Like us, he feels it is unjust."

"The Royal Shrewsbury has now threatened that it will cancel all non-urgent surgery unless more money can be found. Since we are the only non-fundholding practice we are the only ones affected."

"We stayed out of the fundholding scheme because we believe that if you hold your own budget for hospital care it is bound to interfere with your clinical judgement. I don't think you could get a better example of how disgracefully inequitable the scheme is than by looking at our situation."



Helped stand: Dr Tony Evans Photograph: Gavin Fogg



APR 29 1997



fragmented and dispirited as its funding crisis worsens. **Jeremy Laurance reports**

# service ignored by the politicians

an NHS hospital. "Access to nursing care is a fundamental right," she said.

The unexplained rise in emergency hospital admissions – averaging 13 per cent a year over four years – shows no sign of diminishing.

Casualty departments are overstretched and the pressure on beds has meant delays for non-urgent surgery, causing waiting lists to rise. In addition

hospitals are carrying over deficits from the last financial year, which was the toughest financially for a decade.

NHS managers despair as they see the hard won battle to reduce waiting lists being lost once more. Philip Hunt, director of the NHS confederation, representing NHS trusts and health authorities, said: "The task of remaining within Patient's Charter targets for

routine elective work is likely to prove very difficult. The overwhelming sense I have of the future is one of pressure."

The introduction of expensive drugs is adding to the problems. The first treatment for Alzheimer's disease to be licensed in this country, launched last month, costs £1,200 a year and is estimated to be suitable for 200,000 of the 500,000 Alzheimer sufferers.

More modestly priced treatments may impose an even bigger burden when measured against their benefits.

The new cholesterol lowering drugs have been estimated to cost £360,000 to save one year of life for a middle-aged woman.

**Democrats who are pledged to provide an extra £350m for the health service funded from an increase in employer's nation-**

One issue, however, sets the Tories and Labour apart – GP fundholding.

Labour's plan to replace fundholding with GP commis-

But Labour also promises to allow existing fundholders to continue operating, by agreement with their local commis-

The real test of that policy

will be how it can be made to work in the Welsh towns and villages of Montgomeryshire, where the service offered by Dr Tony Evans and his partners, the sole remaining non-fundholders, compares so poorly with that offered by their fundholding neighbours.

## THE ELDERLY PATIENT'S TALE

# Invalid father faces eviction from hospital

Tom McCaffery, 88, is facing eviction from his hospital bed. He suffers from Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases but doctors say he is taking up a much-needed bed on an acute ward when he should be in a nursing home.

His son, Peter, 56, who has power of attorney, is insisting his father remains where he is on the grounds that the National Health Service should provide care from cradle to grave.

Tom McCaffery was admitted to the Royal Preston Hospital in February 1996 and transferred after treatment to the Sharoe Green hospital, Preston, for rehabilitation.

Five months later a hospital team, including consultants, nurses and a social worker, agreed that he should be discharged. Since then his son has been charged £240 a day for the bed and the bill now stands at more than £47,000.

He said: "My father has conditions that can only be properly treated in hospital. We looked at nursing homes ... but they didn't have the facilities the hospital has and obviously I want the best for my father. He is a sick man."

"He cannot wash himself, he cannot walk and he needs help to eat and drink."

A spokeswoman for Preston Acute Hospital's NHS Trust said Mr McCaffery, who is unaware of the controversy, might be taken to a home for the elderly mentally ill for which he could be made to pay.

"Our view is that an acute hospital is not the right environment for him," she said.

Under NHS rules, a person with more than £16,000 capital has to pay the cost of nursing-home care. Mr McCaffery, who owns a bungalow, would clearly fall into that category, the spokeswoman said.



**Staying on:** Tom McCaffery (left) with his son Peter, who is fighting for his father's place in hospital, and faces a £47,000 bill, £240 per day, from the NHS Photograph: Steve Porter

## **THE MANAGER'S TALE**



# Hospitals delay admission to save money

The contracts manager of a major teaching hospital, who wishes to remain anonymous, says budgetary pressures have forced the National Health Service to turn a fundamental principle on its head. Instead of admitting patients as soon as possible given financial and other constraints, there is now a policy of delaying admission as long as possible to save money.

"An explicit instruction has been given to hospitals by their cash-strapped health authorities to let waiting lists increase and not to admit any non-urgent cases for operation until they have waited for a minimum of 18 months – the longest permissible under the *Designated Charter*

"The implications for patients will be dreadful. While they wait for a caecal operation, they go blind. While they wait for a joint replacement they will be in terrible, grinding pain. Hernias may strangulate and patients with gall stones may end up with jaundice. These operations are not expensive and are known to work. So the health authority makes a small saving and lots of patients wait in misery," he said.

"The irony is that over the last few years, surgeons worked overtime, did extra theatre lists came in on Saturdays, all to get rid of the appalling waiting lists that bedevilled the NHS. Now, at a stroke, they are effectively being put on part-time working."

The number of routine surgical day cases planned by the hospital this year has been cut by almost a quarter for general surgery and orthopaedics and by half for ear nose and throat surgery compared with last year.



**Paid privately: Lynette Jackson and her husband** Photograph: Swindon Evening Advertiser

## THE CANCER SUFFERER'S TALE

# Charity raised the cash for drug NHS could not afford

Lynette Jackson had to resort to the collecting tin to pay for drug treatment for her cancer. The local health authority in Swindon where she lives said the drug, Taxol, which costs £9,000 for a course of injections was too expensive for the NHS.

Her ovarian cancer was advanced and other treatments had failed to curb it. Aged 36 and denied the last chance the new drug offered, she turned to charity to provide the treatment the NHS could not. Her local paper the *Swindon Evening Ad-*

veriser ran a campaign to raise the money and her treatment. paid for privately, was completed last month.

Mrs Jackson, who is married and has two children, saw her 47-year-old sister die from the disease last year. She said: "It is hard enough trying to fight the cancer without this extra pressure. I just want to highlight what a mess the system is in. All the doctors have been brilliant. They are just as angry as us about the whole thing."

Although Taxol, made from

the Pacific Yew Tree, is not a cure, trials have shown it can extend life. The *New England Journal of Medicine* said in January last year that it should be regarded as "standard therapy for women with advanced ovarian cancer".

However, Wiltshire health authority claimed that the value of the drug was "not proven". It said that decision about whether to provide expensive drugs such as Taxol were taken on the "best possible clinical evidence".

[illegible][illegible]

**ICH OPEN** Singles  
Wah! in M Tabara (C)  
E. (Aus) dt J Sanchez  
(Fr) beat F Rong (Sp)  
(Sp) dt L Paetz (Ind)

# Crisis grows in Turkey over rise of Islam

Christopher De Bellaigue  
Ankara

The embattled Turkish Prime Minister, Necmettin Erbakan, was yesterday facing a spiralling crisis, inside and outside his government.

Turkey's increasingly jumpy generals, who object to his bid to steer Turkey on to a more Islamic course, issued fresh warnings to his government at the weekend. Two of his ministers also resigned.

The timing of the rebels' departure owed little to chance. Yalın Erez and Yildirim Aktuna, True Path ministers of trade and health respectively, tended their resignations just before Mr Erbakan and members of his government gathered for an eight-hour meeting with senior military figures on Saturday.

At the meeting, the generals, self-appointed guarantors of Turkey's secular identity, told Mr Erbakan that they expect him to reverse attempts

to give Turkey a more pious complexion. The resignations of Mr Erez and Mr Aktuna (the latter a former army officer), were reminders that this demand is supported by some within the government.

The immediate reason for the fuss is Mr Erbakan's failure to implement "recommendations" delivered to him by the generals in February. Since then, squabbles over these proposals — which include bans on Islamic-style clothing and whiskers —

have strained ties between the True Path, a coalition party which largely supports their implementation, and Mr Erbakan's Welfare Party, which does not. The most contentious of the recommendations is a crackdown on religious schools. These, the military fears, are producing a generation of Turks attracted more by fundamentalist Islam than the pro-West principles bequeathed by Atatürk, Turkey's secular founder. Since February, Mr Erez and Mr

Aktuna have loudly supported the military's line, upping their criticism of the Welfare Party and urging Tanu Ciller, the Foreign Minister and leader of the True Path Party, to withdraw from the government. But Mrs Ciller has shown little appetite for this idea. Her removal from the party leadership is cited by the opposition Motherland Party as a precondition for a fresh coalition.

Naturally, Mrs Ciller, herself a former prime minister, is not drawn to

this option. She still hopes to assume a rotating premiership from Mr Erbakan next summer.

The question now is whether Mr Erez and Mr Aktuna can succeed in their stated aims of bringing down the government, or whether they will share the fate of other dissidents who have failed to muster sufficient support from colleagues to pose a threat to Mrs Ciller. This is partly because of the efficiency with which Mrs Ciller purged her party of potential

mischief-makers when she won the leadership in 1993. It is also due to the absence of a credible alternative to the present government. Ministers who have resigned must persuade other dissatisfied True Path deputies that a new coalition can be formed.

While Mr Erez and Mr Aktuna spend the next few days wooing potential defectors, Mrs Ciller hopes to mollify the generals by offering them a timetable for implementing their recommendations.

## Britain and South Korea: 200 years of mutual ignorance

Seoul — Among members of the Royal Family, at least, you would have expected South Korea to have rather miserable associations. It was in Seoul, during a visit five years ago, that the unhappiness which had been rumoured between the Prince and Princess of Wales became obvious to everyone.

Their discomfort, and the correspondents hovering round them, overshadowed the trip; the biggest event in Anglo-Korean relations in the decade since the Seoul Olympics was the irreparable public collapse of the royal marriage.

Now a push is under way to put a new spin on the neglected Anglo-Korean relationship. The pretext is a forgotten celebration: 1997 is the 200th anniversary of the first contact between Britain and Korea. There will be an exhibition of Korean art at the British Museum this summer and a clutch of business ventures (a £300m purchase of British arms is rumoured to be in the offing).

British warships visit South Korea next month, including the aircraft-carrier *Illustrious*, and the campaign was set in motion with another royal visit — last week the Duke of Gloucester made speeches, attended memorial services for the Korean War, and opened the new Seoul office of Marks & Spencer.

The vigour of the campaign is surprising, given the feeble

Richard Lloyd Parry reports on moves to make up for lost opportunities

Images of the West are overwhelmingly conditioned by the influence of the US, which still has 37,000 troops on the peninsula.

When Rover carried out market research for an advertising campaign, they discovered that images of Britain are decidedly negative. "There are two impressions," says Alan Rushworth, executive director of Rover Korea. "One, that Britain's made a poor showing as a member of Europe. Second, that after being the home of the Industrial Revolution, we've ended up lagging behind globally, and with the implication that countries like Korea are getting ahead."

"In the motor business the market is viewed by most Koreans through an American filter, so what we try to do is to establish an image of Britishness, and then develop it into a more homogenised, Americanised version — start with London Bobbies and Guardsmen, and expand to images of adventure, freedom, guts, authenticity."

One of the company's first magazine advertisements features an apparently quintessential British image of a Range Rover on the bank of a stream in which two friends are fishing. Up close though, the men are wearing denim, not tweed, and cowboys, not ghillies' hats. The car is left-hand drive, and the river pictured is closer to Vermont than Scotland.

Economically, Britain has a good record in East Asia — 40 per cent of Japanese investment in Europe is in Britain. Recently, however, there have been hints that Japanese investment may be tailing off as concerns about Enron and a desire to diversify European operations cause Japanese companies to look elsewhere.

But among the Korean *chaebol*, the conglomerates which dominate industry, interest in Britain is growing. Hyundai, Samsung and LG have set up in Britain. "We've already got the four top *chaebol*," says a British diplomat. "Now we're looking lower down the list."

South Korea's minimal cultural influence is exceeded by its economic weight. South Korea is the 11th-biggest trading nation; if the economic graphs maintain their current trends, the South Korean economy will surpass Britain's in the first third of the next century.

Given the likelihood of the collapse of North Korea, and the strains this will impose on the South, this is unlikely. But a reunified peninsula, with 70 million hardworking consumers, will provide even bigger business opportunities. A delegation of British businessmen has just returned to Peking from a trip investigating opportunities in North Korea.

For Britain the truly significant Asian event of 1997 is not its bicentennial with Korea but the passing into Chinese hands of Hong Kong. One of the subliminal messages being broadcast by the voyage of HMS *Illustrious* is that the end of Britain in Hong Kong does not mean the end of British influence in Asia. This surely is also the point of the anniversary of Capt Broughton's first visit.

If Britain does have a future role in Asia, it belongs not with dukes and fleets, but with businessmen.



Reptile house: Three-year-old Lei Hongmei shares a bed with a boa constrictor under a canopy of reptiles after spending 99 days with five other people in a glass cage at the Flying Dragon World in the Chinese town of Panyu. A Hong Kong newspaper said the 'snake people' were not allowed to leave the enclosure. Photograph: Reuters

## Thatcher helps HK bridge the gap

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

Looking pale, but still radiating her trademark imperious manner, Baroness Thatcher yesterday presided over Britain's last serious piece of flag-waving in Hong Kong before the Union flag is lowered for ever in two months.

Taking a break from the general election, the former prime minister, who in 1984 signed the Hong Kong people over to Chinese rule, was back to open the 2600m bridge which will link the territory's new island airport with the mainland.

Built in five years, the main span of the bridge is 1,377m — 97m longer than San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, making it the world's largest road and rail suspension bridge. The total length of the two-section bridge is 2,14km.

Eyebrows were raised in Hong Kong when it became apparent that Lady Thatcher, rather than a Chinese or local official, would open the bridge.

Yesterday's event was notable for the absence of Tung Chee-hwa, who will head the first post-colonial government.

He had been invited to join Governor Chris Patten on the platform but declined. British

officials constantly insist they wish to avoid British triumphalism in Hong Kong. But the airport and associated projects are seen by China as partly designed for British aggrandisement.

This impression was hardly diminished by the arrival of four helicopters during the opening ceremony, with the lead aircraft trailing a giant Union flag.

British modesty was, however,

manifest in a parade representing countries that had contributed to the building of the bridge. Many nations were driving British-made vehicles — Belgium was represented by a Rolls-Royce, Japan by a double-

decker bus — but a vehicle representing Britain itself was inexplicably absent. China was represented by a minibus.

Lady Thatcher spoke of the bridge providing a good example of co-operation. In reality, the start of the project was delayed by acrimonious Sino-British wrangling over who would pay for it.

Once the go-ahead was given, the bridge was built both on time and within budget.

"From my own experience in government," said Lady Thatcher, "I know that these things do not invariably turn out like that ... except in Hong Kong."

Security was tight for the spectacular opening ceremony, crowned by a £400,000 fireworks display.

Some 2,500 police officers were deployed to control the massive crowds which turned up for the fireworks, and also because the authorities feared that Lady Thatcher might be a target for a terrorist attack by the IRA.



## Peking deals out harsh justice to 'separatists'

Teresa Poole  
Peking

China has acted swiftly and severely in punishing those it accuses of sparking bloody separatist Muslim riots in the troubled western province of Xinjiang. After a public sentencing rally attended by 5,000 people in Yining city, three men were executed and 27 others jailed, a move which one exiled Uighur nationalist organisation immediately warned would prompt further protests.

The sentencing and executions took place last Thursday, but details only became available at the weekend. They are the first sentences to be handed down following a series of violent attacks this year by Uighur nationalists against Chinese rule. The Yining riots, which in early February killed nine people and injured 200, were followed by bus bombings later that month in the Xinjiang provincial capital of Urumqi, killing nine and wounding 74. A subsequent bus bomb blast in Peking was also presumed to



be the work of Muslim separatists. All those charged in Yining were ethnic Uighurs, a Turkic-speaking Muslim nationality which for decades has sporadically attempted to throw off Chinese rule and set up an independent "East Turkestan" state.

As well as the three executions, one man was sentenced to life in prison and 26 were given jail terms ranging from 7 to 18

years, said the *Xinjiang Daily*, describing them as the first batch of rioters to be sentenced.

While few Uighurs probably support indiscriminate bus bombings by the separatists, anti-Chinese sentiments are likely to be fuelled by heavy-handed judicial procedures in which large numbers of Uighurs are arrested and processed quickly through a legal system which almost never finds suspects not guilty. Earlier this month, 10 people were arrested for the Urumqi bus bombings. No arrests have yet been made for the Peking blast.

Yining is just across the border from Kazakhstan, the base for the United Revolutionary Front of Eastern Turkestan, an exiled group which claims links with Uighur separatists inside Xinjiang. In the Kazakh capital, Almaty, a spokesman told Reuters news agency that the sentencing would "lead to new spontaneous and massive protest actions. The authorities are merely pushing Uighurs to active revolt". He said a curfew was imposed after the trial.

## China mourns immortal Long March veteran

Teresa Poole

And then there were three. The eldest of China's so-called "Eight Immortals" has died, removing from the political stage another of the Long March veterans whose behind-the-scenes influence continued long after they gave up any official positions. Peng Zhen passed away at the weekend, aged 95, just two months after the death of the most powerful immortal of them all, Deng Xiaoping.

Television newscasters, wearing mourning suits, yesterday read out lengthy obituaries hailing Mr Peng as "a great proletarian revolutionary ... and a major founder of the socialist legal system in China".

Mr Peng was last seen in public in September. Although confined to a wheelchair in recent years, the politically orthodox former party chief and mayor of Peking remained more active in his nineties than Mr Deng, and, as one of the Communist Party's elder statesmen, maintained a wide web of contacts. The death of Mr Peng on Sat-



Peng: Communist stalwart

urday night removes another back-room player in the run-up to this October's full party congress, at which President Jiang Zemin will seek to reaffirm his role as the "core" of the post-Deng leadership. However, Mr Jiang is well aware that two of the remaining immortals still wield substantial influence.

General Yang Shangkun, who was ousted as president in 1992 for trying to build a power base for the post-Deng era, is a sprightly 89. Bo Yibo, also 89, was an ally of Mr Deng and a supporter of economic reform. Song Renqiong, a mere 87, was a party stalwart but is no longer seen as a key figure.

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the Eight Immortals steered China towards reform under Deng's policies. Mr Peng, who in April 1966 was the first top-level target of Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution, was banished to the countryside for 12 years. After his rehabilitation, he was put in charge of drafting amendments to the constitution in 1982, which increased the role of the National People's Congress. From 1983 to 1988 he was chairman of the NPC.

Mr Peng supported an independent legal framework — "before the law, all are equal," he said. But he also insisted on the absolute rule of the Communist Party, objected to Western influences, and spoke out against parts of the Deng reform programme. In 1989, Mr Peng is said to have approved of martial law in Peking, but he also maintained that the pro-democracy students had patriotic motives.



Islam



gap

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# Shame of EU over 500,000 sex slaves

Katherine Butler  
The Hague

East European pimps and organised-crime bosses are transporting up to 500,000 women and girls, some as young as 14, into the European Union each year to be "sold like cattle" into sex slavery and enforced prostitution, European ministers heard at the weekend.

Alarmed at the scale of the traffic, which started to flourish after the opening up of the former Soviet bloc and is now thought to be more lucrative than drug smuggling, EU home and justice ministers agreed the first steps in a co-ordinated crackdown. Anita Gradin, commissioner for judicial affairs, described the slave-trade as "a disgrace for Europe".

But ministers balked at Dutch calls to allow the women, most of whom are smuggled into the EU as clandestines, to remain legally, in order to report and testify against the traffickers and brothel-owners who buy, sell and coerce them.

Most victims come from the former Soviet Union, where job prospects are scant. Many are lured by promises of a job in a restaurant or beauty parlour. On arrival, their passports or documents are taken and they are forced into prostitution under threat of violence or sold on like cattle. Trafficking in women is lucrative, because penalties are small and rewards big. Three Hungarian girls picked up during a raid by Belgian police on an Antwerp brothel last month had been initially bought for £2,000 each and then sold on by dealers for a big profit.

Jürgen Störbeek, head of Europol, said the "ignorance and helplessness" of national police forces in dealing with modern forms of crime like the trade in women and children was "both astonishing and alarming".

The Netherlands, which has for years adopted a tolerant approach to the sex industry, is on the point of formally decriminalising prostitution to allow po-

lice and investigators to weed out sex-slavery rackets.

The Dutch Justice Minister, Wimke Sordrager, asked other member-states to follow her country's lead in granting victims temporary residence permits. Italy and Belgium backed the measure, which they already apply in practice. Italy's minister, who said around 90,000 Albanian women had been trafficked into the country in the past year, went further, arguing that victims should be shielded from prosecution even for other offences, to remove the fear which keeps them in bondage. Too often the women themselves end up on trial if they seek help. But Britain and France, fearing a commitment to grant residence rights to sex-slave victims would open the door to a flood of illegal immigrants, succeeded in watering down the proposals.

British officials said they could not sign up to a binding EU commitment which could be "held against us" in the courts by immigrants seeking to regularise their status. Nor, they said, did Britain accept the need, outlined in the Dutch plan, to appoint a full-time rapporteur to monitor and exchange data on trafficking in women.

Charities working against the trafficking in women from poor countries believe the British response reflects the overriding concern of EU governments, which is to keep out illegal immigrants rather than address the human-rights violation being perpetrated against hundreds of thousands of women.

Critics also point out that while EU ministers repeatedly speak of the need for more police co-operation, even the greatest self-proclaimed enthusiasts have so far failed to ratify the convention, which would allow Europol, the fledgling EU police intelligence-sharing agency, to operate effectively. Negotiations on a new EU treaty have also become bogged down over proposals for more power-sharing on crime and judicial matters.



In remembrance: Artists in the town of Korostan, Ukraine, wearing protective clothing yesterday as they celebrate Orthodox Easter, drawing attention to contamination in the region caused by the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, exactly 11 years ago. Photograph: Reuters

# Big guns join in Powell's clean-up

Mary Dejevsky  
Washington

President Bill Clinton, three former US presidents, their wives, and numerous American celebrities rolled up their sleeves yesterday morning and armed themselves with brooms and mops to lead 5,000 young volunteers in a glibby clean-up of a rundown area of Philadelphia. The mass scrubbing effort in the city's litter- and graffiti-strewn Germantown district was the high-profile opening event in a three-day national convention on volunteering, grandly styled "Presidents for America's future".

The driving force behind the "summit", which brings together more than 30 state governors, 60 city mayors, about 300 business leaders and representatives of hundreds of volunteer agencies, is the retired Gulf War general, Colin Powell. The general's possible entry into US politics is still the subject of much speculation despite his decision not to run for office last year.

Mr Powell was at pains to deny any political motive to his involvement. "I'm very happy in private life," he told NBC television, "I am not in political life." However, he declined to dismiss categorically the idea that he would never stand for the presidency, and clearly relished being a black American role model.

While Mr Powell may be one of the least controversial figures in public life and the central aim of the summit - to provide through voluntary effort adult mentors, safe places, satisfactory health care and education for children in deprived areas - reflects a characteristically American emphasis on the values of private initiative and community involvement, the project has not lacked for critics. The most direct have asked how the momentum to improve inner city areas can possibly be sustained after the razzmatazz of the weekend is over.

Other criticisms are more telling. Certain politicians, on the political right and left, argue that much of the work that the volunteers are being recruited to do - teaching reading, counselling young people in difficulty - ought properly to be paid for by the state. "Teaching our children to read," said a leading Republican yesterday, "is the job of the education system." To this is added the difficulty of recruiting the right volunteers - or even any volunteers at all - to work in areas that are often dangerous for outsiders.

The cost of the campaign is also at issue. Designed to improve the living conditions of 2 million out of the 15 million children thought to live in poverty in the US, the programme has been conservatively costed at \$15bn (£9bn), to be paid by the state. Employers are being urged to release volunteers on full pay - a plan that is meeting resistance.

And despite its determinedly apolitical character, with a former Democratic president, Jimmy Carter, and Republicans Gerald Ford and George Bush, agreeing to take part, the summit has brought party political accusations. Mr Clinton, say some opponents, is using the summit to try to increase funding for his first-term initiative on volunteering, the AmeriCorps. This pays \$5,000 towards college fees to young people who spend a year doing community service.

# Jospin wants to legalise cannabis

John Lichfield  
Paris

The French Socialist leader, Lionel Jospin, said yesterday that he would decriminalise cannabis if he becomes Prime Minister after the parliamentary elections in June.

He also confirmed that he had taken cannabis, an admission he first made during the presidential election in 1995. "I did it once in the United States, with a young woman, and I think once in France," the Socialist Party general secretary said.

Mr Jospin, 59, was speaking to the unconventional current affairs programme, *L'Autre Journal* ("the other news"), on the cable television Canal Plus, the cable channel not to be fully legalised, he said. But criminal penalties for its possession or sale should be weakened or removed.

If Mr Jospin wins the election - which seems unlikely, on present form - France would therefore become the first large country in the world to condone the taking of cannabis.

His proposal would bring France in line with the Netherlands, which has had a running battle with the present centre-right French government for its alleged laxity in preventing cannabis from being traded through Belgium into France.

"Legalising sounds like justifying, penalising is absurd," Mr Jospin said. "I think we have to find a line somewhere between the two."

This implies something like the situation in the Netherlands, where cannabis remains technically illegal but the possession or sale of small quantities is permitted.

The latest poll forecast that the centre-right government would win between 311 and 331 seats, the Socialists and Communists between 219 and 245.

# Jetlagged backpackers fall for Kashmiris' con-trick

Jan McGirk  
New Delhi

Every night you can find them outside Indira Gandhi International airport in New Delhi. Their insistent quality would make a timeshare salesman seem bashful and hesitant. Even seasoned travellers have succumbed. Warnings do not seem to work. These people's lies are intricate - and apparently more convincing to travellers than current Foreign Office notices. The results can be disastrous.

Dozens of visitors to New Delhi are duped every night during the hours of pre-dawn purgatory after their planes touch down. While the travellers try to find a taxi and check into a hotel in the Indian capital, the Kashmiri tourists move in - to dramatic effect.

Most guidebooks note that the woods, foot springs and mountain trails near Srinagar, although beautiful, remain no-go areas for casual tourists because of tension between militant Muslim separatists and Indian troops. Foreigners who have strayed into the violence have been abducted and murdered; so have Indian tourists. These books do not caution against unsolicited sales pitches from strangers after dark - it would seem to be common-sense to avoid such characters the world over. But tourists keep taking the bait and booking sudden trips to Kashmir.

Resistance is reckoned to be lowest between midnight and 4am and jetlagged tourists arriving in the middle of the night are particularly vulnerable. Or perhaps the pollution in the city, rated fourth in the world for contaminated air, cuts away at the brains of those unused to it.

The Vale of Kashmir, a high Himalayan valley surrounded by snowy peaks and laced with waterways, has been racked by insurgency for seven years. Tourism, long the economic mainstay, is now limited to the uninformed or foolhardy.

Security checks, curfews and strikes in Srinagar make the atmosphere grim, despite the beauty of the landscape. Tourism used to be promoted by officials as a sign of normality. Now, however, even the state tourist office suggests "visitors should trek only where there is security."

Simon Grant, a Cambridge gap-year student, fell for an elaborate sales technique when he arrived in Delhi. His taxi-driver, Farid, cruised the capital, going from one guesthouse to the next, and when unable to find a vacancy, pulled up at an office to ask for help.

A sign read "Tourist Desk. Official." Behind the counter was a sleepy Kashmiri, who told Mr Grant: "Delhi is so crowded there are no rooms. Go some place else. South too hot. East is too dangerous. West also." Mr Grant took this advice eagerly.

He cashed some travellers' cheques and bought a one-way flight to Srinagar which would depart within hours, plus a prepaid houseboat stay on Dal Lake and a bus ticket to Agra.

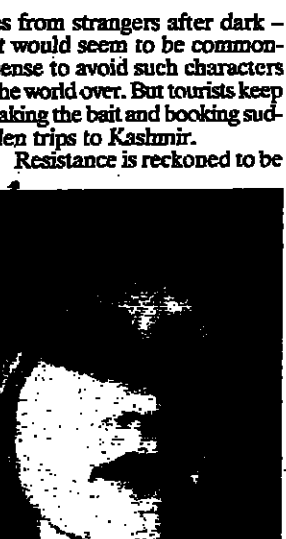
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Sometimes the tourists' advice has catastrophic effects. Almost two years ago Catherine Moseley and her boyfriend, Paul Wells, from Nottingham, flew to India on holiday. Like most discounted flights, theirs reached Delhi after midnight but the young couple felt prepared. "We hired an official taxi and reserved a room at the Imperial Hotel," Ms Moseley said.

"But the driver said Jan Path Lane was dangerous so late at night. We were sure to get robbed. We ended up in Kashmir almost exactly the same way."

She was now returning for her third visit - hoping to find some trace of Mr Wells, whose adventure went tragically awry.

Kidnapped at gunpoint on a popular trekking trail, he was one of six tourists captured by members of the Al Faran group, who at first intended to exchange them for jailed comrades. A fifth backpacker was beheaded and the sixth escaped. The rest are still missing.



Catherine Moseley: Her boyfriend was kidnapped

lowest between midnight and 4am and jetlagged tourists arriving in the middle of the night are particularly vulnerable. Or perhaps the pollution in the city, rated fourth in the world for contaminated air, cuts away at the brains of those unused to it.

The Vale of Kashmir, a high Himalayan valley surrounded by snowy peaks and laced with waterways, has been racked by insurgency for seven years. Tourism, long the economic mainstay, is now limited to the uninformed or foolhardy.

Security checks, curfews and strikes in Srinagar make the atmosphere grim, despite the beauty of the landscape. Tourism used to be promoted by officials as a sign of normality. Now, however, even the state tourist office suggests "visitors should trek only where there is security."

Simon Grant, a Cambridge gap-year student, fell for an elaborate sales technique when he arrived in Delhi. His taxi-driver, Farid, cruised the capital, going from one guesthouse to the next, and when unable to find a vacancy, pulled up at an office to ask for help.

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# Robbers target Russia's graves

Alastair Macdonald  
Reuters

Ivanovo - Even the dead are not safe from Russia's deep economic crisis. Grave robbers, driven by hunger and desperate poverty, are on the rampage in the textile city of Ivanovo, north-east of Moscow.

Unlike the body-snatchers of bygone days when pioneering medical researchers sought human remains for dissection, they come at night in search of more readily saleable graveyard booty, from plastic flowers and metal plaques to tombstones.

The scourge has reached a new intensity as relatives stream to local cemeteries on annual spring pilgrimages to clean up graves for yesterday's Russian Orthodox Easter and next week's May Day holidays.

"There have always been a few idiots and drunks who take things," says Margarita Noskova, the head of services at Ivanovo's Balino cemetery. "But now they're stealing anything and everything, wreaths, aluminium plaques, even whole tombstones."

She blamed the *homzhi*, or homeless drunks, but said professional operators were also involved in the traffic that saw the metal sold to scrap dealers, the granite recycled into new headstones and artificial flowers put back on sale in Ivanovo's street markets.

The police refuse to take the problem seriously, Noskova said, even though a plastic wreath can cost the equivalent of £19 - a month's income for many of the town's cotton mill workers.

"It's awful. They just steal and steal. And what can we do about it?" shrugged Valentina Guseyeva, a pensioner laying plastic flowers at the grave of her sister. But she warned with typical Russian philosophy: "God will punish them."

# significant shorts

Laurent Kabila, the Zairean rebel leader, said yesterday the United Nations had 60 days to repatriate all Rwandan Hutu refugees in Zaire "or we will do it ourselves".

Rebel soldiers again blocked aid workers and journalists from going to areas where thousands of Rwandan refugees are believed to have fled. But Mr Kabila said that he was seeking a personal apology from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan for accusing his troops of deliberately allowing thousands of refugees to die.

Reuters - Kisangani

# Former Yeltsin hardliner dies

Nikolai Yegorov, former chief-of-staff to President Boris Yeltsin and a leading proponent of the hard line that led to war in Chechnya, died on Friday at the age of 45.

A Kremlin spokesman said that Yegorov, who was the minister for ethnic minorities when Mr Yeltsin ordered troops to crush the secessionist Chechen leadership in December 1994, had suffered from a long illness. Removed from his post in 1995, Yegorov made a comeback as Yeltsin's chief-of-staff in January 1996. He was sacked in July last year, and returned to his earlier post as governor of the southern Krasnodar region, where he lost his job to a communist opponent in December.

Reuters - Moscow

# German apology to Guernica

Germany, in a message from President Roman Herzog, acknowledged the guilt of its pilots in the destruction of the Spanish town of Guernica 60 years ago, but stopped short of apologising for Europe's first aerial bombardment of civilians.

Reuters - Guernica

# Soldier kills eight in Yemen

A Yemeni soldier shot dead five soldiers and three civilians in southern Yemen ahead of voting in the country's first general election since a civil war in 1994. An official said the soldier was arrested.

Reuters - Sanaa

# Winnie wins by a landslide

Winnie Madikizela-Mandela won re-election as president of South Africa's African National Congress Women's League. Despite speculation that President Nelson Mandela's former wife would be voted out because of her style of leadership, she beat her deputy, Thandi Modise, 656-114 during a meeting of 1,000 delegates in Rustenburg in the North West province.

Reuters - Johannesburg

# Hermaphrodite stabs children

A Chinese hermaphrodite, fed up with being the target of ridicule by his neighbours, stabbed six of them to death, including three young children, in southern China.

Feng Guohui was born with both male and female sex organs, and four years ago underwent surgery to become a man, the *Yangcheng Evening News* said. However, Feng felt his neighbours were still ridiculing him.

Reuters - Peking

# The candidate just dying to win

Andrew Gumbel  
Rome

On paper, Adolfo Farri seemed a perfectly acceptable candidate for Italian local elections held yesterday. At 61, he had become a well-known figure around Figline Valdarno, outside Florence, and was running for mayor. But there was just one small reason why voters might have wanted to think twice before choosing him: Mr Farri died of a heart attack last Monday.

His demise had not escaped the electoral commission, which referred it to the Interior Ministry. But the Interior Ministry did not want his death to derail his candidature.

Electoral law makes no provision for deaths occurring mid-campaign, so his name stayed on ballot papers, and it is possible that today Figline Valdarno will find it has elected a deceased mayor.

Partly because of upheavals of the past few years inspired by anti-corruption investigations, Italy has one system for municipal races in towns with a population of less than 15,000, another for populations of more than 15,000, another for provincial and regional polls and another for general elections. Each contest has its own rules. For example, a dead man cannot stand in a municipality of less than 15,000. In larger towns, however, corpses may only be disqualified if they go through to the runoff, two weeks after the first round.

If things are complicated for candidates, spare a thought for voters. A few years ago an army veteran was told he was not allowed to vote because, according to the register, he had died during the Second World War. Despite rather raucous signs of life he displayed for the next half hour, he could do nothing to sway the returning officer. To prove he was alive, he had to go to the town-hall registry office for a *certificato di esistenza in vita* - literally a certificate of his living existence. Unfortunately, since it was a Sunday, the registry office was shut and he had to stay dead for 24 hours longer.







Nicky Clarke: he will take only 12 weeks' worth of bookings in advance. At 8.30am on Mondays, booking starts for the 13th week. By 8.45am they are usually gone. Photograph: Andrew Burman

## Interview

Deborah Ross  
talks to  
NICKY CLARKE

So, to Nicky Clarke's Mayfair salon, past one of those receptionists whose own hairdo looks as if it's been created with a spirit level and who says "y-o-o-e-s?" in a way that means: "Wouldn't you be better off at Curl Up & Dye on the Holloway Road?"

Then it's down the gold-balnstraded, Hollywood-style staircase hung with poster-sized photographs of his beautiful clients beautifully coiffed - "Hello, Jemima... Hello..." - and into the VIP room. Here, it is explained, the likes of Anthea Turner can have their hair done without being gawped at by the Essex girls who have saved up for the last year (or two) to be Nicky Clarke.

No, I'm told, I can't just potter about the salon. Yes, Nicky's about somewhere, but he's attending to a client. No, I can't chat to him as he snips, teases, sprays and goes "whoosh" on one of those great stools that revolve like a funfair ride around the client's chair. A Nicky Clarke hairdo costs £250. (Plus £1.75, should you want a cup of tea while he's going about it.) He has to concentrate. It wouldn't be fair on the client if he were distracted. Wait here, if you will, and he'll pop in between clients to talk to you. Yes, he is very much like royalty himself these days, isn't he? Although, that said, no, a curtsy will not be necessary.

The VIP room is very posh. There are more photographs, only this time they are signed ones. There's Julia Carling ("Jo Nicky, it's all the rage"); the Duchess of York ("Sarah, 1994"); and the Linleys ("Jo Nicky, with love Serena and David"). There's also a copy of the Duchess of York's autobiography, *My Story*, knocking about. "Jo Nicky and Lesley," the Duchess has written on the flyleaf. "Happy Christmas, 1996, love Sarah."

As I wait, I start to read. There's not much else to do, after all. I am just up to the bit where she is trying to explain away the toe-sucking - "John Bryan and I were actually playing at Cinderella when the picture was snapped, the whole scene was not nearly as intense as it looked" - when, irritatingly, Nicky bounds in, shaking his own hair like some pedagogue Afghan hound.

"Have you read this?" I ask, holding up the book. No, he confesses, he hasn't. But that's because he is not a great reader. "I would love to tell you I'm into Dostoyevsky," he says, "but I'm not." Today, it is a Gucci black shirt, Gucci brown leather trousers, Gucci gold-buckled shoes and something black, diaphanous and Gucci tied artistically around his neck. "I seem to like what Gucci are doing at the moment," he explains.

He is 38 and quite attractive in a girlish way. I don't mean he's camp or effeminate, just that he's delicate-featured, with fair skin, strawberry blond shoulder-length hair and little peaky bits of sideburn. Should you ever have had an erotic dream about any of the Bee Gees, say, I imagine Nicky pretty much does it for you.

Does he think of himself as good-looking? "I do what I can. If my weight goes up I bring it down. My only bad habit is the odd cigarette. Can I have one of yours?" I wonder, does he ever feel bad about charging so much for a hairdo? No, he says, he does not. "In fact," he adds cheerfully, "I am seriously considering putting the price up. Actually, I could probably charge double and still get away with it. What, £500? Yes, but I won't because even I can't get my head round that."



# How Nicky got our heads round a £250 haircut

"Look, why do I charge what I do? Basically, because I can. If one company thinks they do a job better than another, they charge more, don't they? If you don't want to pay it, then don't buy it."

Certainly in Nicky's case lots of people do want to buy whatever it is he offers. He will take only 12 weeks' worth of bookings in advance. Then, on Monday mornings at 8.30am, the salon starts taking bookings for the 13th week. Usually all these appointments are gone by 8.45am, "although six minutes is our record."

Is he really better at what he does than anyone else? Certainly, many think so. As it is, his PR person is darting about waving a fax from Patti Lupone, who's in town and requires his attention. "Yes, of course I'll squeeze her in. I love Patti."

Once he was summoned to Paula Yates while she was in labour in hospital. "Bob phoned me at home at 6am. 'Get down here. She needs you,' he said. By the time I got to the salon he'd phoned again twice. 'For fuck's sake, get down here or she's never going to have the baby,' he shouted." Nicky went. Paula told the hospital staff to unplug the foetal heart monitor so Nicky had somewhere to plug his hairdryer in.

So, yes, he is probably a very good hairdresser. But that does not, of course, entirely account for his appearances on *This Morning* or for the fact that Liam Gallagher drops in. "Yeah, Liam was round the other day. He really liked my John Lennon lithographs, which I bought in New York about 10 years ago. Then he saw I owned the complete Beatles collection, and we bonded a little bit there."

The thing about Nicky is that he's always been in the right place at the right time. He's never had to backcomb OAPs in some back-street salon. At 16, he got a job at Leonard's, the most swinging salon of the Sixties. When he and John Frieda left Leonard's, they took a substantial por-

tion of the client list, too. In short, Nicky has always attended to the famous. And once you make one famous person look nice, other famous people pile in.

Plus, of course, there is Lesley. She is Nicky's wife, and she manages the business side of Nicky Clarke. Lesley used to be a designer, but she has a degree in mathematics and, apparently, a mind like a nail.

It was Lesley who encouraged Nicky to go it alone, and raised the money for him to do so. "She went into the bank with this fucking good business plan," he enthuses.

Lesley's about somewhere - probably up in the office doing nasty sums. I say she has always sounded rather scary in a Lady Macbeth sort of way. Nicky looks aghast,

and World War or some kind of civil war: "I'm not very up on my political history." Anyway, they fell in love, married, then came to England, where they settled into a two-bed, no-bathroom terraced job on the Old Kent Road and had six children.

Yes, it was overcrowded. "The council were always throwing their hands up in horror." But, still, "I had a brilliant childhood." Like all his siblings, Nicky attended the local grammar school. "We were a very academic family. I have a sister with a first-class degree." However, he got only two O-levels, English language and literature. He was never academic himself, he says.

By this time he'd already decided he wanted to be a hairdresser. When he was

just wanted you to know my new address" - and they were in business. It wasn't pleasant, says Nicky, but it was real life.

Eventually, Nicky became Frieda's chief oppo in a swish new salon in New Cavendish Street. Here, among other looks, they created the Purvey cut, as sported by Joanna Lumley in *The Avengers*.

"We did it, yeah," Nicky owns up. "Well, John did it when I was his assistant. The first cut, though, was very straight, but had movement. The fact that it became a huge bowl had nothing to do with us."

In the late Eighties, Nicky and John had a falling-out. It was something to do with Frieda promising Nicky a share of the business, then allegedly reneging on the deal. Nicky took him to court. Frieda settled out of court. The two are on speaking terms again, but will never be bosom pals as they once were. When I ask him if Frieda does Norma Major's hair, he says, disdainfully, "I think someone at John Frieda does it."

I'd read somewhere that at some point in the early Eighties he spent two months in a drugs clinic coming off heroin. "That," he says, getting shirty again, "is something I have never discussed and will never discuss." OK, then. But will you tell me how the experience changed you? "No. If I do that, I'll be accepting it's true." If Nicky were indiscreet about himself, his clients might not trust him. Nicky knows this.

So I change the subject. He must be very rich, I say. He owns, aside from all the Guccis, two swanky houses and a swanky car, and his two children attend private schools. Yes, he replies, he is quite well off, thank you.

I wonder if he has decided who he is going to vote for, come the election. "Oh, I'm a staunch Tory," he says. Socialism, he continues, is like Communism. "It looks OK on paper, but it's a crummy system that doesn't work. And you have to have entrepreneurs to provide the backbone of the

country. Yes, of course you want everyone to have the same educational opportunities but... look, I'm just a hairdresser, for fuck's sake. I'm not a political theorist."

Who in the public eye would he most like to get hold of? Well, Blair would be good. Tony? No, Lionel. "I met him at a party recently. He said I could make him over, but it hasn't happened, yet."

He would also like to have a word with the Charlton boys about all that sweeping of hair over bald bits. "It actually makes them look older," he cries. "Now, I'd better get out on to the floor or I'll be lynched."

I have finished *My Story* by the time he next reappears, so an inspecting the Duchess's photograph on the cover. Perigie, I say, used to have bushy, frizzy hair, but now it's all sleek. How come? "Lots of blow-drying; lots of product," he says.

Ah, product. Nicky has his own product range. Hairomathery, it's called, and it's worth £5m a year. No, Nicky Clarke products are not simply endorsed by him. He and Lesley created them from scratch, in conjunction with chemists. Product is fantastic stuff, he says.

Do I use product? he asks. No, I'm afraid not. I am a Wash 'n' Go sort of person, I say. Mostly, I find it a job to remember to get dressed in between. Nicky goes "humph". I say I can't remember the last time I went to a hairdresser. Mostly, I keep my fringe in trim by singeing it every time I light a fat off the gas cooker. Nicky goes "humph" again. It saves me a fortune, I add. Nicky says he can see how it would.

So, Nicky, I finally ask while giving him my loveliest smile, what would you do to my hair? He just says, "I don't know. I'd have to have a good look at it."

All in all, he took four cigarettes off me and never gave me a single hair cut. But it wasn't an entirely wasted six hours. I got to read *My Story*, which saved me £15.99.

Nicky has always been in the right place at the right time. He's never had to backcomb OAPs in some back-street salon

then he cries: "But she's a sweetheart."

Sweetheart or not, current tabloid gossip has it that the two separated several months ago, and now live apart. When I ask him about this, he gets shirty. "I take the stand this is not something I have to discuss," he says. "I know what our situation is and it's very personal."

Nicky and Lesley preside over a substantial business empire. It wouldn't do to expose ribs.

Anyway, he must now go back out to check on his client. He is gone for a long time. So I go back to *My Story*.

Nicky was born to an English father and a Greek Orthodox mother. His parents had met during a war, in Athens, when his father, an electrical engineer, was in the army. Nicky is not sure if it was the Sec-

12, his father had sent away for a 12/6d barber's kit, as advertised in the *Daily Mirror*. Pretty soon Nicky was doing all the cutting. Why, though? "Because it was the late Sixties, early Seventies, and everyone was very fashion-conscious. I wanted to be creative, and started playing with hair. At 14, I was giving my friends very funky cuts."

After training at Leonard's, he left with Frieda when it became obvious that the shop was going into decline. "Leonard was great. Very generous, very inspirational. But it got to the point where he just wasn't around much any more. He was too busy having lunch with Tony Curtis."

He and Frieda decamped to a little shop off the Marylebone Road with Leonard's files and appointment sheets. All they had to do was ring up: "Hi there, Mrs Joe Blow,

## The very latest way to have a baby by mistake

Long ago it was crocodile dung. Yesterday, it was the Pill. Today, Persona. Glenda Cooper on the quest for a perfect contraceptive

Woody Allen once revealed the most effective oral contraceptive: "I asked a girl to sleep with me and she said 'no.' Celibacy is, after all, the only foolproof method of avoiding pregnancy, as more than 400 women discovered last week."

They had been using the new contraceptive device Persona, launched six months ago, a small monitor that measures a woman's hormone levels and indicates when she can make love without conceiving. It was hailed as the biggest breakthrough in contraception since the Pill (it was once said that the three greatest benefits for women this century were the Pill, the vote and the washing machine). But those who think the Pill is the all and end-all of contraception are wrong. It is only one of a long

line of devices the human race has invented to avoid conception. Attempting to distance sex from procreation has led humans over the centuries to embrace crocodile dung, dried beaver testicles, poisonous mercury and Coca-Cola.

It has been argued that the first recorded attempt at contraception goes as far back as the book of Genesis. There, Onan tried to avoid family complications when asked to sleep with his brother's wife by practising the withdrawal method. For his efforts he "displeased the Lord wherefore he slew him", according to Genesis 38.

But the earliest recorded contraceptive invention dates back as far as 1850BC, according to the Family Planning Association. An Egyptian papyrus of the time detailed ingredients for a vaginal pessary

made of honey, soda, crocodile dung and a gummy substance. History does not relate how effective it was - or indeed whether any man was attracted to users as a result.

A few centuries later the fashionable had dumped the dung for a more aesthetically pleasing medicated lint vaginal sponge, which was soaked in a mixture of acacia, dates and honey: a scientific combination - acacia ferments into lactic acid, which is still in use as a spermicide today.

Intra-uterine devices (IUDs) also go back 3,000 years, when women used well-shaped pebbles, although by Casanova's time the more sophisticated were using a half lemon as a cervical cap. (Casanova, incidentally, ate 50 oysters for breakfast every morning and swore by British contraceptives, according to *The Ultimate Irrelevant Encyclopedia*.)

Even oral contraception is nothing new. Chinese women used to knock back mercury in small doses, whereas in Canada in the 16th century, women drank strong alcohol laced with ground beaver's testes.

Women in the remote Appalachian hills of Virginia and North Carolina are still reputed to crush seeds from cow parsley and mix it into a glass of water, which they drink immediately after having sex.

Tests on mice have shown that the seeds contain chemical compounds that block the production of progesterone, the hormone that prepares the uterus to receive and nurture the fertilised ovum.

Last year's visit of the Toronto-based History of Contraception Museum to Britain revealed some of the more bizarre contraceptive

devices, which 64-year-old Percy Skyns has devoted the past 30 years to building up - including amulets made from the bone from the right half of a black cat, worn round the neck to ward off conception; dried weasel's testicle, strapped to the thigh; even a plug of wax from a mule's ear.

For a more modern alternative, a Harvard University study in 1969 found that Coke had sperm-killing properties. The study was commissioned after reports that the drink was often used as a douche in countries where contraceptives were in short supply. Diet Coke was found to be the most efficient of the Coke varieties for this purpose.

No discussion of contraception would be complete without that Johnny-come-lately, the condom. In fact, that's not true - the Egyptians

used them, although their animal gut sheaths were not for contraceptive purposes but to prevent against injury and infection. It was also a way of judging the class of your lover, with different styles denoting different social status.

Condoms were allegedly given their name by Dr Condom, a court physician in the time of Charles II - who, judging by his many illegitimate offspring, did not always employ them. Highly prized ones were made of sheep gut with a pink ribbon round the end; in the 18th and 19th centuries pornography frequently decorated the most expensive.

It was not until 1843 and the invention of crepe rubber that the condom was transformed, and not until the Thirties that latex was used. The most modern interpretation

is perhaps Karl Machamer's "liquid condom", in which liquid latex is applied. Instructions are much the same as for traditional condoms but some users complain it takes too long for the latex film to dry; the inventor recommends using a blow dryer to speed the process up.

As a footnote, here is a lesson for linguists and those planning national birth control programmes. In 1971 a Dr T Healy wrote in the prestigious journal *Science* that contraception was playing a role in the spread of sexually transmitted diseases in Scandinavia. While gonorrhoea had declined in Sweden it had not in Denmark. Dr Healy put this down to the fact that while the Swedes have a simple word, *kondom*, the Danish was *svangerskabsforebyggende middel*. The tongue-tied Danes bought fewer.



# Time to call 'Cut!' on party election broadcasts

When the dust clears next week-end and the electoral autopsies begin, among the first bodies up on the slab ought to be party election broadcasts. The parties themselves will agonise for a long while about their effectiveness – Molly Dineen's biographical exercise on behalf of Labour vs John Major's simultaneous impersonation of Lord Kitchener and Winston Churchill. Disentangling their impact from the general noise of the campaign is difficult, and most are more effective in satisfying party egos than swaying loose votes. But a question worth asking is: what they are doing on our screens at all?

Broadcasting – for once the saying is apt – is undergoing a revolution. Digital transmission is upon us; huge expansion of channels, terrestrial and satellite, is nigh. The idea that in the midst of this creative chaos we should have party broadcasts imposed on the BBC and ITV but not the Disney Channel, Carlton Select or Asianet is to state only part of the anachronism. These are not broadcasts intended to inform citizens in order to make them more informed participants in the dance of democracy, as choreographed by John Stuart Mill. (What would he have made of the Natural Law Party's broadcast?) What the mainstream parties put out is designed to make us buy. Yet the BBC's Charter and Licence forbids advertising, and Channel Three

and Sky usually charge for it. It is time that the charade of party election broadcasting was recognised for what it is and the whole set of clubby arrangements underpinning it junked.

Some of the anomalies surrounding election broadcasting were demonstrated by last week's fuss over footages and the far right. It is unlikely that anyone could have found Martin Tyndall on behalf of the British National Party anything other than risible. A demented-looking old cove using phraselogy and poses cribbed from an old Movietone News clip of Oswald Mosley shot against the cliché of the white cliffs (you get the point). However repellent his views, this was merely ridiculous. The demonstrators outside Broadcasting House were not asking the right question when they deplored the BBC's decision to go ahead. Why didn't the club of broadcasters, led by the BBC, refuse all such slots entirely?

The BBC had gone to court a few days previously to defend its right to censor the Pro-Life Alliance's film of abortions. A functionary with the grand title of "chief political adviser" was trotted out to claim that the BBC had a prior obligation to public taste and decency that allowed it to decide which bits (literally, in this case) of the anti-abortion party's film could be seen. The merits of the anti-abortionists' case are not the issue. The problem is why the BBC feels obliged to broadcast tendentious mate-



rial from political parties at all. The answer is partly the BBC's desperate clinging to its central place in the national scheme of things. Here is also an instance of how Britain, despite 18 years of allegedly anti-corporatist government, is still run by cliques. No law compels the BBC or commercial television to run these broadcasts. No parliamentary committee decided the ratio of candidates to broadcasts. It was cooked up years ago in private discussions, reminding us that the lineage of party political broadcasting goes back to a stitch-up in the mid-1920s, by the BBC's astute director-general, John

Reith, and Stanley Baldwin. The case for letting some cold air into the cosy committee rooms is strong. The broadcasters themselves surely realise they are in for trouble. What the BNP and the Pro-Life Alliance have done gives a lead to every tuppenny-ha'penny outfit which for the price of 50 lost deposits can demand a slice of prime-time broadcast. As the mavericks and the mere opportunists come out of the woodwork, are the broadcasters going to start picking and choosing? The parties, too, must surely see the limitations of the genre. Why PEBs

often fail is that their "grammar" is wrong. Advertising is sharp, ironic – and brief. As Molly Dineen herself acknowledges, "real" fiction works so much better. Of course, some PEBs have impact – Hugh Hudson's *Kinloch – The Movie* in 1987 is credited with a sharp rise in the Labour leader's stock with the public, though the rise was as high among the 75 per cent of electors who had not seen the film but did respond to the publicity it generated. What parties want is to sell. So why not advertise: buy time on air in 30-second slots?

Some may deplore that as the Americanisation of British politics. But if advertising replaced the closet compulsion of the present scheme, it would necessarily bring with it American-style rules about party expenditure and finance. Suddenly a millionaire businessman – Paul Sykes – pops up and spends hundreds of thousands of pounds placing pro-Bry adverts. But only in newspapers. The example demonstrates two things. First, how much we need a regime for party financing which sets legal limits on outlays and forces clear accounting of every pound spent, every limousine or helicopter donated. The point is not to re-open old arguments about the state financing of political parties. It is to make the case for freeing the political process while increasing scrutiny and inspection.

The Sykes example says something else. He can buy space in newspapers,

but not television or radio. They are constrained by rules made in the days when frequencies were limited and channels clogged. Those rules are unfit for the modern communications age. Parties are in the business of marketing and persuasion. Voters are mature enough to judge the product. There is no reason why the effort to sell to the public should, in television, any longer be cramped and cramped by the tired conventions of party election broadcasting.

## Getting back to grass roots

On Saturday, men with mattocks got to work digging up the turf at Brighton and Hove Albion. The club – which has not covered itself in football glory lately – survives but its ground is to go. Yesterday, the greensward of Cardiff Arms Park was sold off in job lots prior to the redevelopment of that sacred site, where you have to go back a few years to recall any great Welsh rugby moments. What will the collectors do with their sods? Framing the blades isn't appropriate. Perhaps, instead, hundreds of laws will become sites of a scientific experiment – testing the old groundsmen's claim that grass grows better if it is regularly trampled with sussed boots.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### End of simple belief in government

Sir: As a visiting American studying ideology, I was intrigued by your editorial "Death of ideology is greatly exaggerated" (24 April). Ideology never dies, it just seems to fade away when there's consensus about the key ideas. Your refreshing insistence on the well-being of the "small guy" restarts a vital discussion.

The problem is that the enemy of the little person is not always "centres of power". It takes a strong government to confront a big business, just as it takes a morally courageous individual to confront a government bent on destroying rights. The reason government is a better friend than business is that it is constrained by democracy and legal structures that offer public accountability far beyond what businesses face. So long as a few consumers want what business has to offer, the providers don't have to worry about the normal niceties.

We are coming to the end of simple-minded beliefs in government, or in the market. Either can do great things; either can commit atrocities. Old Labour may have stifled enterprise, but buccaneer capitalism is debasing our culture and undermining elemental conceptions of justice.

In both Britain and the US, a "politics of human development" is being born, and you can see it in the kind of issues that are coming to the fore. The voters plainly want new concepts and institutions that help families succeed, that support people of all ages in building a sense of competence and integrity, that reduce violence, and save the environment. Responsive government, enterprising workers and managers and careful protection of individual rights are all essential to these tasks.

Dr KENNETH R. HOOVER  
London, N19

The writer is a Visiting Academician at the London School of Economics and St Catherine's, Oxford.

### No trust in Tory pension plans

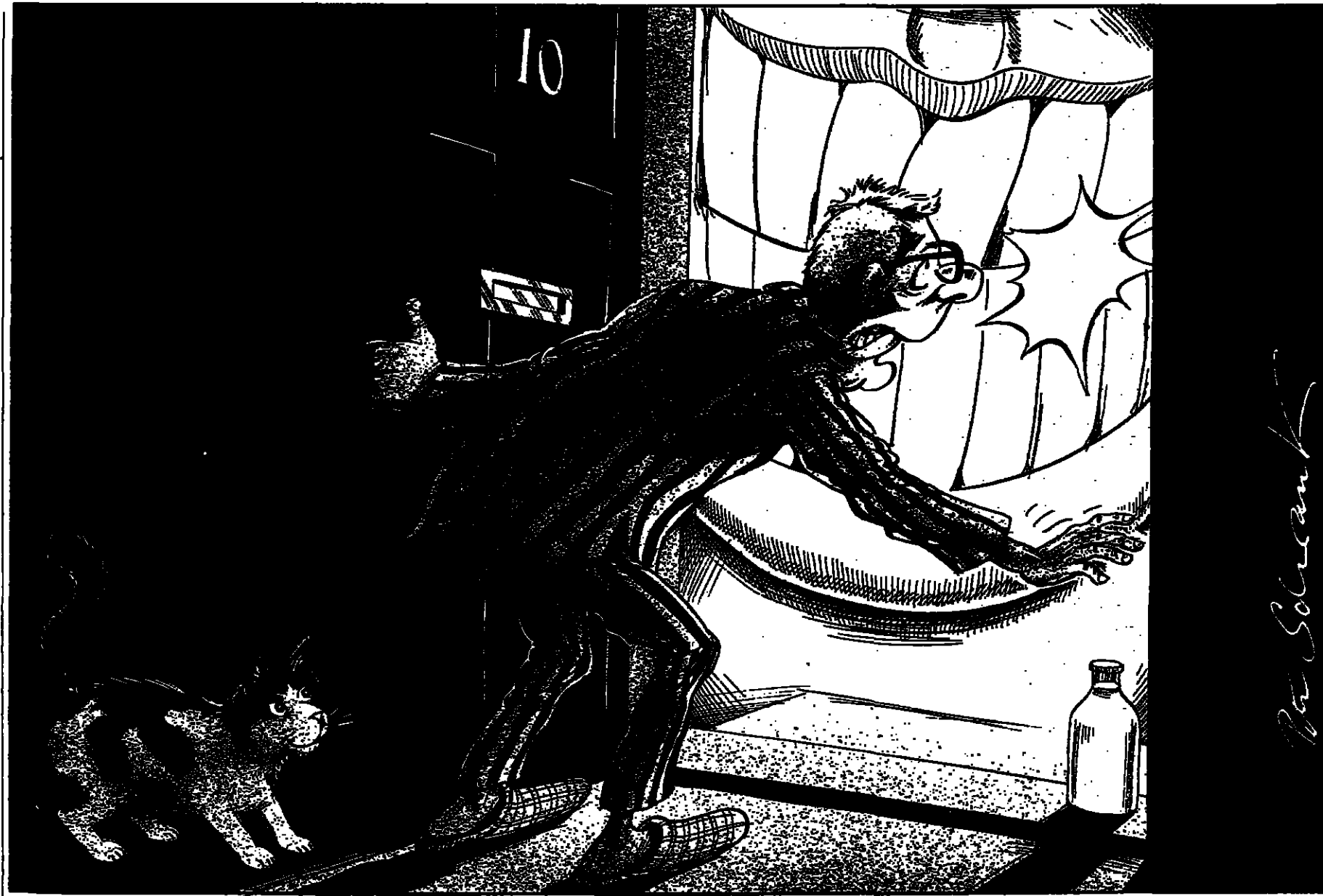
Sir: What a short memory John Major has ("Blair and Major battle over pensions", 26 April). It is not so long ago that his government raised the retirement age for women from 60 to 65, effectively abolishing the state pension for this age group.

He now has the effrontery to attack other politicians and to suggest that he would resign rather than endanger the state pension. In an election where he has made "trust" an issue he has forfeited the right to be trusted.

J. E. SMITH  
Sutton, Surrey

Sir: The Tory idea of a pension scheme funded by one's contributions during a working lifetime is dependent on being able to earn a reasonable salary and being able to earn that salary every year ("Blair attacks pension proposals", 25 April).

As a well qualified environmental consultant, I have been self-employed for 10 years. My income has fluctuated wildly through no fault of my own. It depends on the market – the "sacred" free market or my services – my health and other family factors. This in turn affects my input into my pension scheme. No politician ever



mentions that you cannot contribute to your pension if, for whatever reason, you cannot earn the money through no fault of your own.  
DR W G LE-LAS  
Canterbury, Kent

Sir: Which party has specific proposals to ban age discrimination? Most civilised countries such as France, Germany and the US have laws which ban discrimination on the grounds of age, and it would cost little to add age to the variety of categories against which it is illegal to discriminate in the UK.

For the last nine years, hundreds of thousands of people in their 50s and 60s have been the first to go in the downsizing that has been going on. These people are not included in the unemployment figures after 12 months, which is nice for the Government when comparing unemployment figures with other countries.

Having reached a time of life when they planned to be saving for the retirement years, these people find themselves spending such savings as they have. This will put enormous demands on the social security system in the next 10 to 15 years. A treasury of valuable experience has also been lost for ever to the economy.

Even the Lord Chancellor's office states that if you are more than 55 you are unlikely to be appointed a magistrate, and you cannot be one if you are over 60. A loss of mature experience to our legal system.

There are a lot of swingable votes up for grabs.  
BRENDAN PARKE  
Woodbridge, Suffolk

### Protect works of art from moving

Sir: May a voice from the viewing public answer David Lister's article, "When treasure becomes a burden" (16 April).

With today's ease of travel, why may people not see art where it belongs, as at the Wallace Collection? Paying for entrance to galleries (as happens more and more) the visitor is not told when half the gallery is closed, or rooms are closed for redecoration, for rehanging or for preparing a temporary extraneous exhibition. There is no indication of what can or cannot be seen. With constant movement nothing is predictable, which may be a director's dream but is a visitor's nightmare.

Do these spectacular exhibitions really bring in the desired money, despite insurance and other expenses? The visitor has to book the day and hour of visit in advance, only to find himself in a milling crowd, trying to get a glimpse of exhibits. For this he has had to travel to London or Paris, Madrid or Amsterdam.

This modern picture circus moves from one grand venue to another, while behind the scenes a director says: "If you do not lend me X, I will not lend Y", leading to the qualms over keeping or breaking the conditions of a bequest.

Sir William Burrell, singled out as a short-sighted donor, was a businessman and a realist. Accidents should not happen, but on occasions they can, and do.

wherever works of art are handled. To deny it is either crass lack of awareness or economy with the truth.

If the envisaged end is art on the Internet, why worry? You needn't go to the theatre, because you can see it on TV. You needn't go to a museum because you can have it on computer screen. Who cares? Then real art can be left in place, in peace, for real appreciation.

Mrs KATE HELL  
Biggan, Lanarkshire

Sir: David Lister ("When treasure becomes a burden", 16 April) is free to draw his own conclusions about the Burrell Collection from the facts, but it is important that these facts are correct.

It is not the trustees who have "called in the parliamentary commissioners". The draft provisional order has been promoted by the City of Glasgow. The trustees have been obliged to oppose it formally as we are of the view that we have a prescribed agenda to follow, which is to uphold the terms of the gift so meticulously set out by Sir William Burrell.

In any event, the widened lending powers being sought will bring no benefit to the collection, although I suppose they might have a spin-off for Glasgow in tourism terms, but even that is arguable. The trustees have seen no evidence that Glasgow has "lost out" on any exhibitions because of the restrictions on lending items from the Burrell Collection abroad. In any event, there are many items in the rest of Glasgow's excellent

collection which can be loaned without restriction.

The changes which the City seeks to make amount to somewhat more than "dots and commas". The draft provisional order seeks powers to lend items from the collection for exhibition in any public gallery or other public place in any part of the world, without being responsible for any loss or depreciation thereof... with such arrangements (if any) for insurance as the Council may decide. They thus want to sweep away the carefully negotiated lending terms inserted by Sir William in the memorandum of agreement and the will.

COLINDONALD  
(Senior Trustee  
Sir William Burrell's Trust)  
Stirling

### Parking power

Sir: On the Continent, should you reach the traffic warden while he is writing your parking ticket it will be destroyed as long as you move on. In Germany, if the parking meter is out of order one has the right to park there until the meter resumes working. In this country, there seems to be no human or social angle in the approach of traffic wardens and their employers.

Isn't enough money bled from car owners to allow a little space for a more human approach? Could we not learn from our European partners?  
JEREMY GARSON  
London SW11

### Catholic schools founded on faith

Sir: Terry Marshall's claim (letter, 26 April) that "church schools, funded out of the public purse, are denying access to the children of secular parents" shows a misunderstanding of our 2,200 Catholic primary and secondary schools that are working within the state educational systems of England and Wales.

They succeed schools built and funded by poor parishioners to provide Catholic community education for their children, and later taken into the state system as standards had to be improved. Many of the original sites and buildings were wholly paid for by really poor people; many present-day buildings were built with substantial contributions from them. Ordinary parishioners still make substantial contributions towards the cost of new school buildings and of their continuous and expensive repairs.

These schools were built and are still being financed for Catholic education of about 750,000 children who would otherwise be a charge on the community. They inevitably cater for their share of pupils who would not be particularly welcome elsewhere.

Our schools do admit children of other parents whenever they can but, if they did not maintain their Catholic community ambience, they would probably lose the foundation on which rests their academic success and their current attraction to other parents.  
HUGH LINDSAY  
(Bishop of Hexham  
and Newcastle, 1974-1992)  
Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria

### Lib Dems attack Michael Howard

Sir: Labour was not the only party speaking for victims of crime in Folkestone and Hythe yesterday ("Tea and sympathy for victims who live in Howard's back yard", 26 April). Liberal Democrats in a packed meeting in Hythe town hall attacked Michael Howard for cutting criminal injuries compensation.

Victims of crime have learnt that there is no such thing as a free tax cut. We argued that a home secretary trying to control crime by sentences alone is like a golfer who drives off the tee with his putter. You cannot sentence criminals unless you can catch them first.

You say Michael Howard's majority is "unassailable". I spent yesterday watching Liberal Democrats assailing it with skill and determination. It is no more unassailable than Nigel Lawson was before Mrs Thatcher fired him.  
Lord RUSSELL  
Liberal Democrat  
Social Security spokesperson  
House of Lords  
London SW1

### Nursing homes do accept death

Sir: Mrs D E Cartman (Letters, 24 April) is wrong to suggest that there is no suitable palliative care outside the hospice movement. The Registered Nursing Home Association (RNHA), in conjunction with the Cancer Relief Macmillan Fund, is currently training nursing home staff in palliative care nursing. Nursing homes do of course nurse their residents to the end, not "striving officiously to keep alive", but accepting death as the natural end of a relationship with both patient and family, which may have lasted several years.

Unlike patients in the National Health Service, our patients are also our customers, and customers are free to go elsewhere. Private sector homes providing the kind of care described by your correspondents would go out of business, and the sooner the better.

Dare we hope that the same would be true of incompetent hospital wards? Perhaps there is something to be said for market forces after all.

ANDREW MAKIN  
Yorkshire Branch Secretary  
Registered Nursing Home Association  
Keighley, West Yorkshire

### Nuclear waste by the trainload

Sir: Your report (Significant shortfalls: "Inquiry into radioactivity scare", 23 April) that radioactive waste leaked from a container damaged on route from Trawsfynydd nuclear power station to Drigg in Cumbria. The container was sent by road on the authority of Magnox Electric, the firm responsible for decommissioning at Trawsfynydd.

The accident rate per tonne-kilometre on roads is far higher than on rail. There is a railway line linking Trawsfynydd with the rest of the rail system. Railways in Cumbria are capable of carrying freight.

Students of the endemic confusions in British inland transport policy would be obliged if Magnox Electric would now explain why the dangerous load was forwarded by road, not by rail.  
Professor GEORGE HUNLEY  
Church Eustance, Oxfordshire

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مكتبة من الأصول



# Who'd be a son of a bitch banker?

James Wolfensohn expected acclaim, but found himself attacked. Kevin Watkins explains why

James Wolfensohn is an aggrieved man. The president of the World Bank feels that the new initiative to resolve the debt problems of poor countries has attracted unfair criticism. "I expected a standing ovation," he told a press conference last week. "Instead I'm being treated as a son of a bitch."

His reaction is wrong-headed and counter-productive. As finance ministers gather in Washington today for the spring meeting of the IMF-World Bank, Mr Wolfensohn should aim his fire at the IMF and those countries that are systematically seeking to delay and minimise debt relief for the poor.

He could start with some blunt talking to the US Treasury Secretary, Robert Rubin. Earlier this month, Mr Rubin unveiled a major initiative to support social and economic recovery in Africa. Increased investment in health and education was identified as a priority. A few days after the announcement, the US supported German and Japanese demands to delay, for two years, debt relief for Uganda, the first country to qualify under the initiative. Thanks to the combined efforts of the World Bank and the British Government, the delay was reduced to one year. Even so, this will cost Uganda around \$190m - money it had pledged for more than doubling the budget for primary education in a country where 2.5 million children are not in school.

In a bizarre effort to explain his policy paradox, the US says it wants to use debt relief as a lever for promoting economic reform. Yet both Uganda and Bolivia, which must also wait another year for debt reduction, have exemplary records in economic reform, having carried out IMF-World Bank programmes for around 12 years. Other countries, such as Mozambique, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Zambia, all chronically indebted and impoverished, will not begin to be eligible until after 2000.

## The money was pledged for 2 million children not in school

Worse than that, the conditions that the bank and the fund demand have a lamentable record on the ground, undermining investment and growth. IMF "stabilisation" has become a euphemism for the collapse of basic health and education systems. Debtors are required virtually to enter a social and economic suicide pact with the IMF. Such demands should be abandoned.

Whatever the intentions of the US in seeking to delay debt relief, it is playing into the hands of those opposed to the debt relief plan, notably the finance ministries of Germany and Japan (countries that have benefited from generous debt relief in the post-war period). For its part, the IMF has developed foot-dragging and obstruction on debt relief into an institutional art form, first denying the existence of a debt problem, and now using its technical influence to understate the scale of debt relief required.

Set against this formidable political coalition, Mr Wolfensohn has allies in Britain, the Scandinavian countries, The Netherlands and Australia. More important, he has an ally in international public opinion, which is increasingly disgusted with the failure of governments to resolve the debt crisis, and is increasingly aware of the human costs of debt.

Yet moral questions and the human face of the debt crisis are conspicuous by their absence from arcane disputes about finance. So, too, is any consideration of the human costs of a failure to reduce the burden of debt on poor countries. In Mozambique, 200,000 children will die this year as a result of infectious diseases that could be prevented through low-cost primary health intervention; less than half the country's children are in primary school. Meanwhile, the government of Mozambique is spending twice as much repaying external creditors as it is spending on health and education combined.

The story is dismally similar elsewhere. According to a recent study by Oxfam International, eight highly indebted countries in Africa are spending more on debt repayments than it would cost to reduce child mortality to the targets set at the 1990 World Summit for Children. Without that debt, 3 billion young lives could be saved. That is why Oxfam International has called for debt relief to be integrated into a broader international plan for reducing poverty.

Recently, Mr Wolfensohn outlined his strategic vision for transforming the World Bank into a dynamic force for poverty reduction. If he is to deliver, he cannot afford to fail on debt.

The writer is senior policy adviser at Oxfam.



# Mrs Thatcher's airhead revenge

by Polly Toynbee

Tempers are fraying. Things are getting fractious in this interminable campaign. When it's all over, one great relief will be to hear no more idiotic yelps: "They're all the same!" "They're how does she think we'll get PR except by voting for the only parties promising a referendum on it? Indeed, to all those young who hate the narrow choice on offer, the chance of PR is the one issue that should get them out to vote: next time they could have a rainbow of choices. As for not voting because of poverty, the car and the arms trade, that will not do: you are obliged to vote for even minuscule improvement for those worse off."

Exhibit C: Irvine Welsh (*Trainspotting*, *Ecstasy*) writes in *Loaded* magazine this week with real anger on behalf of the "disadvantaged and dis-

**'Only half of those under 24 will vote. Not voting is a fashion statement. It is cool.'**

affected". He complains of "all the bollocks talked by essentially well-meaning but fundamentally misguided people along the lines of 'It's your duty to vote!'... I fuckin' loathe and detest the Tories as much as anybody, including the ones in the Labour party (which these days means just about all of them)". So what's he going to do about it? He asserts his right not to vote until "this democracy modernises itself to become truly representative and not just for the rich playing a load of disparate consumer groups off against each other." But how is democracy going to "modernise itself" unless he votes for it?

Anger I can understand. But anger seems to have added his brains. To vote is not to commit yourself to anything or anyone - most people hold their nose when they vote. A vote is not a precious gift which you're damned if you are going to bestow on any underserving bastard; one lot of bastards is always more underserving than the other.

Withholding your vote does not punish those you hate. Not voting is cutting off your nose to spite your face, an act of mindless self-destruction, something Welsh knows all about; it may indeed fit his view of the world. It is a surreal act, achieving nothing except in your own secret universe. The anger of the dispossessed and the unmentionable poor is an understandable reason for them not to vote - more than 80 per cent of young blacks won't - but that doesn't make it a good reason. Few of us will ever get the chance to vote for a party of our dreams, but there is always the least worst option. It does not endorse the system to vote and it certainly does not send out shockwaves of protest if you don't. So what will happen if a few more people vote this time? It will only be a minor footnote; the world will move on just the same. It will not force the politicians to delve into the dark night of their souls and ask themselves why they are not more loved.

Irvine Welsh may be wrong but at least he is impassioned. The airhead know-nothings in *The Face* are the ones that make you despair. Rock the Vote, a clever campaign to persuade the young to get on to the electoral register, succeeded in getting 300,000 young people to sign on by the 20 March deadline. Charles Stewart-Smith, its organiser, has done so well by telling them that voting is an individualistic thing, not a joining thing. They don't like joining anything. What's wrong with them, I ask? He tries to put a positive spin on it: "People often call the young apathetic, but I don't think they are." The evidence? "Well, two-thirds of them have been on some kind of animal rights demonstration." Oh. Wonderful. That's really good to know. We both laugh, otherwise you'd cry.

Who do you blame? Possible culprits include: Thatcher and all her works, a dud education system, dumbed-down youth culture and dimly patronising TV programmes. I don't, for once, blame the politicians - every time they make the error of appealing to the young, it makes you cringe. And, in any case, the young are like the rest of us - to be persuaded on a raft of issues, not bribed with youth issues such as the Criminal Justice Act, drug laws or student grants. In the end, I blame the young themselves. They will, of course, grow up - but probably not by Thursday.

# Fireproof Winnie scorches back

I seemed set to be a humiliating week. First she was ridiculed for selling dirt from the garden of her old Soweto home to tourists. Then she was found trying to flog a warty-and-all account of her life with President Mandela for £200,000. But Winnie Mandela, fallen heroine of the anti-apartheid struggle, has bounced back.

Yesterday, despite the best efforts of the ANC leadership, Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, as she now styles herself, romped home to be re-elected for a second consecutive term as president of the ANC's influential Women's League. Despite the unfavourable press, she flattened all rivals, including the health minister, Dr. Nkosazana Zuma, who was the leadership's preferred candidate.

The ANC put on its bravest, even happiest, face. But it must be dismayed by the strength of support for Madikizela-Mandela, who since her monumental fall from grace has rebuilt her political career on often vicious criticism of her ex-husband's government and the slow rate of

political change in South Africa. Dr Zuma would have been a far more malleable winner.

Given that it is only five years since she was suspended from the Women's League and stripped of all her party titles - and two years since her divorce - Madikizela-Mandela's political rebirth and consolidation is steaming ahead at a remarkable pace.

No amount of bullying - complained of by her critics in the Women's League - or appalling behaviour diminishes her grassroots standing. She cuckolded the saintly Mandela after his release from jail, was implicated in the murder of 14-year-old Stompie Seake, and since the late 1980s has been at the centre of a series of fraud allegations.

Like a black Elvis, Winnie can spend as much as she likes - during her divorce, court documents showed that President Mandela spent more than R3m (now about £400,000) between 1990 and 1995 keeping her in the style to which she had become accustomed - and somehow remain at one with the poor, who see no inconsistency in her criticism of ANC

leaders for their extravagant lifestyles. She is the consummate populist politician.

"Which black person doesn't have a problem with a bond," she asked delegates yesterday, referring to press reports that she could not pay her mortgage because of mounting debts. She added, with no hint of irony, "I am proud of my poverty."

Madikizela-Mandela has risen from the ashes by courting the townships. Unlike others, she has not moved to a swanky northern suburb in Johannesburg. She lives in a virtual palace, but it is in Soweto. And she plays on the impatience of people in the townships for real change.

"She is almost withdrawn when you meet her one-to-one," says a political journalist attempting to explain her appeal. "But put her in the back of a truck in a squatter camp and she goes ballistic." Small wonder, then, that there are concerns in the ANC that she may yet lead a populist split from the party.

Whites fear Madikizela-Mandela for her uncompromising politics and her popular support. The white joke

doing the rounds this week is that some unsuspecting tourist may yet find specks of Stompie's blood in the dirt being sold from her old garage at R50 a bottle.

Perhaps blacks have longer memories for the golden days as a proud and wilful - and as yet unsullied - Winnie kept the struggle alive while her husband languished in prison. Perhaps they are just softer-hearted to a woman who might have had it all. A few months ago, the local press carried a photograph taken at a school fundraiser in Soweto. On the platform sat Madikizela-Mandela, all alone.

Four seats away, President Mandela was deep in conversation with his new love, Graca Machel. The president's ex-wife looked every inch a sad and lonely loser.

But yesterday Winnie Madikizela Mandela was once again a winner, buoyed up once more by the devotion of the masses. As she held her fist in triumph, she looked certain to remain a thorn in the side of the ANC.

Mary Braid

# What opinion pollsters do after elections

"Most people desperately want the election to be over and done with. I am the opposite. I hope it never comes."

The speaker is tall, handsome, silvering Robert O Sample, boss of the mighty Mururoa Poll empire. As he sits atop Mururoa Towers, the tall, handsome, silvering office block in London from which he directs the opinion-tasting of the nation, he stares out over the population of Britain who are, figuratively speaking, his bread and butter.

"Did you know that 67 per cent of the British people get the words 'figuratively' and 'literally' mixed up?" asks Sample, uncannily reading my thoughts. "In a survey we did in 1987, two-thirds of the nation could not see anything wrong with the statement 'I literally had kittens'. It should, of course, be 'I figuratively had kittens', because 'figurative' is the word to use when talking of the opposite of 'real'."

Which is odd, I point out, when you think that in the world of painting it is quite the opposite.

"Before election-time," orates Sample, "we in the opinion-testing industry are in the news, in demand and on fire. This is our time! This is when the voice of the poll is heard in the land! This is when the good and the bad, the ugly and the wealthy, beat a path to our door to find out what people are thinking. Better still, they come to ask us what people want to hear. If we tell them that the voters are sick of sleaze, they go away and strike sleaze off the agenda. Then they come back to us to find out if it has made any difference."

And after the election?

"After the election we are as much in demand as a man with a broken leg at a disco," says Robert O Sample, his eyes going suspiciously moist.

"Whoever heard of an opinion poll being taken the day after an election? The week after? The month after? Slowly, slowly, after that it revives, when people start asking questions like, 'How do you think the new government is doing?' and 'How were its first 100 days?'. But it would be fair to say that nine out of 10 pollsters take a long holiday after any big election."

He stares out of the window ruminatively, down at the streets below, where Londoners like ants scurry to and fro.

"Odd, isn't it?" he says, half to himself. "It's mid-afternoon."



Miles Kington

Most people are at work. Then who are all these people walking about in London? Where are they all going? There is a short pause. I suggest that he must have done a poll on this as well. "Oh yes, we did. How could I ever forget that poll?" There is another pause and a slight sniff of emotion.

"We stopped a sample of people walking through London streets in mid-afternoon and simply asked them where they were going. And do you know what? Most of them lied to us. They all looked shifty anyway, but most people had something to hide. They were late back to work after lunch, or back from the bookie, or fresh from an assignation. This was the first time we came to realise, reluctantly, that people do lie in answer to pollsters' questions. For me it was a day of tragic implications."

And have people been lying to you in the 1997 election run-up?

Robert O Sample turns a gaze on me brimming with tears. "How else can you explain the wild vicissitudes? One moment it is 'Labour heads for landslide', then 'Labour's lead melts away', and next moment 'Labour heads for landslide' again. How can it vary so wildly unless people are lying to us? Do you think we are doing it for fun?"

In the ensuing short pause, I hear what I can only describe as a chuckle. Robert O Sample is chucking. So that rogue poll in *The Guardian* last week?

"I'll tell you something, my boy. We are doing it for fun. When the polls tell the same story, we like to vary it a little. If the polls never change, people start to think that they don't need polls, and that would never do. So we play around a little with the results. But you must never print this. Do you promise?"

I give him my solemn promise and leave, more thoughtful than when I had arrived.

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## obituaries / gazette

## Allan Francovich

That Allan Francovich should die prematurely, succumbing to a heart attack in the Customs Area of Houston Airport, is hardly astonishing to those whose lives were touched by this remarkable, hyperactive film director. I picture him arriving to meet me in the Central Lobby of the House of Commons, bag and baggage full of contents, out of breath, and blurring out the latest discovery that he had made about the iniquity of the authorities.

He reeled off facts at a mind-boggling rate. Yet, unlike most conspiracy theorists – of which he was proud to be one – Francovich was scrupulous about fact, and particularly about unpalatable facts which did not

suit his suspicions. I never caught him cutting any inconvenient corners to arrive at the conclusion he wanted. He was, above all, a seeker after truth, whosoever that truth might lead.

Francovich was born in 1941, into a Jewish engineer's family in New York, but brought up in the Mira Flores district of Lima, one of the most sophisticated societies in the Americas. At an early age his extraordinary facility for languages was developed. It was to prove a launching pad, not only for academic success, but also for making investigative films which required mastery of precision in language as the complicated projects he undertook

crossed international borders. Nothing Francovich either said or did was other than complicated.

From the University of San Marcos in Lima, he went to Notre Dame in the United States, where he did a Bachelor of Arts in English, Romance and Slavic Languages. From there he went to the Sorbonne to study Comparative Literature and to L'Ecole des Langues Orientales, where he studied Russian, Serbo-Croat and the Arabic that was to prove so useful two decades later in untangling the complexities of Lockerbie.

He completed his education at Berkeley, California, where he studied the Dramatic Arts and was prominent in the uni-

versity when Flower Power was at its height.

In 1970, Francovich married Kathleen Weaver, a graduate of Edinburgh University, who collaborated with him in his first major investigative film, *Short Circuit* (1970), relating to the murder of nuns in El Salvador. His linguistic talent was put to effective use in another joint venture, *On Company Business* (1980). Their work run the prestigious International Critics Award for the best documentary at the Berlin Film Festival, exposing as it did many of the thuggish practices of the Central Intelligence Agency.

It was a matter of sadness to him that he drifted apart from his wife and was without her

during the creation of the documentary *Gladio* (1992) which was partially instrumental in bringing down an Italian government by exposing its links with American intelligence and the Americans' gross misbehaviour in assaulting democracy in Italy.

My first introduction to Francovich was from Dr Jim Swire of the British Lockerbie Victims, who said that he had persuaded the best investigative film director in America to turn his attention to the crash of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Dumfriesshire, on 21 December 1988 that had killed his daughter Flora along with 259 other victims.

Once persuaded that there

was a cause for suspicion, Francovich was the most determined of ferrets. The end result was his film *The Maltese Double Cross* (1995), made in conjunction with his fervently loyal colleagues John Ashton and David Ben-Aryeh and their cameraman Jeremy Stavenhagen. The showing of the film on Channel 4, and in the House of Commons, did more than anything else to awaken the British from J.S. Mill's "deep slumber of a decided opinion" about responsibility for Lockerbie.

Quite simply, Francovich proved the so-called Malta connection on which the case against Libya depends, was a fabrication. Francovich identi-

fied the shooting down by the USS Vincennes of an Iranian airliner carrying pilgrims to Mecca as the starting point for Lockerbie. The Iranian Minister of the Interior, Ali Akbar Mostafaei, swore that there should be a "rain of blood" in revenge. He had been, crucially, the Iranian ambassador in Damascus from 1982 to 1985, and had close connections with the terrorist gangs of Beirut and the Bekaa valley. They had infiltrated an American drug sting operation, which allowed them to circumvent the security precautions at the Rhine Main airport in Frankfurt. It was typical of Francovich that he could go to the Jafa family of the naïve courier who had perished in Pan

Am 103, and capture them on film in a powerful sequence showing up the activities of the Neuss terrorist gang operating in Germany.

It was Francovich's multi-dimensional, multilingual talents which I am sure will eventually unlock the truth about Lockerbie. Rare indeed, outside fiction, are the crusaders of truth who, time and again, have put themselves in personal danger as Francovich did.

Tam Dalyell

Allan Francovich, film director: born New York 1941; married 1970 Kathleen Weaver (marriage dissolved 1985); died Houston, Texas 17 April 1997.

## Scott Forbes

Scott Forbes was a complex and very private Englishman who rocketed to fame in the surprising role of a cowboy called Jim Bowie, on a popular American television series, *The Adventures of Jim Bowie*, in the late 1950s.

For years afterwards, he would find himself surrounded by excited American tourists in public places, having become part of the fantasy life of the American nation. It was a well-kept secret at the time that Jim Bowie, with his deep Southern drawl and astonishing good looks, was played by an Englishman educated at Repton and Balliol College, Oxford. The promoters of the series, feeling that the US public would not accept a frontiersman played by an Englishman, launched him with a fabricated biography, claiming that he had been born in South Africa and grown up in eastern Pennsylvania.

Forbes drifted into acting as a young man-about-London after someone suggested, entirely on account of his good looks, that he audition for the leading role in a play. Up to that moment he had no thought of acting, having read PPE at Oxford and gone on to a job at the Ministry of Defence. He got the part and was taken up by the theatre impresario Binkie Beaumont, at whose suggestion he took the stage name of "Julian Dallas".

As Julian Dallas he went to the Liverpool Old Vic for a year in the late 1940s, working with Tyrone Guthrie and Peter Glenville. He then returned to London for a number of plays, including Peter Ustinov's *House of Regrets* and *The Cripple Song* directed by John Gielgud, and

made two films with the J. Arthur Rank Organisation, *The Reluctant Widow* and *The Blue Mill*, before going to Hollywood under contract to Warner Brothers in 1950.

He did a lot of work in American films, theatre and television, but many people felt that he should have stayed in London. John Gielgud, touring California with his *Ages of Man*, said, "Oh Julian, my dear boy, whatever are you doing here?" John Osborne saw him in *The Rainmaker* at the La Jolla theatre in California and said: "We need people like you in the London theatre. You would be a star!"

As an actor Forbes had a quiet intensity which could draw his audience into the action. His magnetism, which began with his looks, deepened with his development as an actor. He had a very beautiful, expressive voice and knew how to use it. He went to drama school in New York, studied acting with Morris Carnovsky and worked on his Southern accent for Jim Bowie with the actress Jeanne Moody, from Alabama, who subsequently became his wife and mother of his two daughters, Elena and Jessica.

He acted in the theatre opposite some of America's leading ladies, including Eva Le Gallienne in Maxwell Anderson's *Elizabeth the Queen* (1961-62); the critic James Powers described him as "the dashing, handsome and bewitching Earl of Essex", played Maxim de Winter in *Rebecca* on live television in 1952 and made films with Errol Flynn and James Mason. He also played opposite Eartha Kitt in *Seventy Seven* (1959), made in Cuba.

Forbes returned to Britain to do some television in 1960, including Alan Owen's play *Lena*, *My Lena* with Billie Whitelaw, and again in 1963, this time to work in the theatre, playing the husband in Harold Pinter's *The Lover*, with Vivienne Merchant and directed by Pinter. It was at this point that he became seriously interested in writing plays and scripts. His play *The Mezzanone*, produced by Ronald Hayman at the Lambda theatre in 1964, was subsequently performed all round the world and made into the film *The Penthouse* (1967) with Suzy Kendall.

He and his family returned to live in Britain in 1963 and he continued to write plays and scripts as well as acting, mainly for television, becoming a familiar face on BBC television's *Play of the Month*. But in the second half of his life he gradually lost the taste for public performance, becoming reclusive and quiet in his ways. These years were characterised by a deepening love of his family and home, of the classical music he would listen to by the hour and a habit of solitude and long hours spent in writing.

When Scott Forbes died his family held a small private funeral with no announcements in the press. He is buried in a country churchyard near his last home in Wiltshire, close to the fence, away from the crowd.

Jenny Pearson

Conrad Scott Forbes, actor and playwright: born High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire 11 September 1920; married 1954 Jeanne Moody (two daughters); died Swindon, Wiltshire 25 February 1997.



The public-school-educated Southern cowboy: Forbes, Repton and Oxford, as Jim Bowie

## General Andrés Rodríguez

In February 1989, when General Andrés Rodríguez toppled Alfredo Stroessner from office after his 35 years as president of the impoverished republic of Paraguay, few people saw it as more than a power struggle between the two men. But Rodríguez proved the unlikely architect of a democratic civilian regime which is now attempting to bring the small landlocked country out of decades of isolation.

Like many upper-class Latin Americans, Rodríguez, who was born in the small town of Boja in 1923, chose an army career as a way to get on in society. He graduated from the military academy in 1946, and soon after, as a cavalry officer, was involved in the 1947 civil war which led to the banning of the Communist Party and the beginning of the ascendancy of the authoritarian Colorado Party.

After Stroessner became president in 1954, the rule of the Colorado Party became increasingly dictatorial. Rodríguez was busy rising through the officer ranks, and became closely identified with the Stroessner regime. By 1968 he was the man who annually pledged the armed forces' allegiance to the president; their relationship was cemented on a personal level when one of his daughters married Stroessner's son.

But the short, stocky general was also alleged to be one of the main beneficiaries of the corruption which also characterised the Stroessner years. Rodríguez was said to have amassed a fortune from smuggling – anything from Scotch whisky to drugs in more recent years – as well as from foreign currency dealings. He lived in a replica French palace, and used his position as a confidant of the Paraguayan strong man to gain further influence and wealth.

Personalised regimes of this kind are seldom without bitter rivalries. At the start of February 1989, Rodríguez, by then commander-in-chief of the First Army Corps, led a coup against the old dictator. Many people saw this as a pre-emptive strike by the younger man, who had got wind of the fact that Stroessner was attempting to get rid of him.

Whatever the truth of the matter, Rodríguez's coup was successful, and he confirmed his position in presidential elections on 1 May 1989. Stroessner was despatched to

exile in Brazil, and most of the Colorado Party faithful thought that life could simply go on as before, with a younger, more energetic strong man running the country.

It was at this point that the script began to acquire unexpected twists and turns. Rodríguez lifted the ban on most of the other political parties – though not the Communist Party. These parties finally got him to accept a new constitution, which debarred him from standing for office again. The general even took steps to end Paraguay's isolation, by making sure it was involved from the start with Mercosur, the common market linking Paraguay to Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay.

In 1993, Rodríguez helped oversee the elections for his successor, and accepted the elec-

tion to president of the first civilian in more than 50 years with good grace. At the same time, he was careful to preserve his own position by getting himself named a senator for life – thus ensuring parliamentary immunity to try to prove any of the corruption allegations against him.

In 1996, Rodríguez was instrumental in helping resolve a military challenge to the new president, Juan Carlos Wasmosy. By then, however, he was already suffering from the cancer which resulted in his death.

Nick Caistor

Andrés Rodríguez Pedotti, politician: born Boja, Paraguay 19 June 1923; President of Paraguay 1989-93; married 1948 Nelda Reig (three daughters); died New York 21 April 1997.

## Sir Nicholas Baker

The West Country is normally thought of by political commentators as a Liberal (or, nowadays, Liberal Democrat) stronghold. But there was a time, not long ago, when the Conservative Party could boast of a stronghold within the stronghold. That was when three Tory MPs, held in adjoining constituencies and were, besides, close personal friends. The three were Nicholas Baker, Robert (Viscount) Cranborne and James (now Sir James) Spicer.

They were an unlikely trio of musketeers. Cranborne and Spicer are outgoing and – some might say – flamboyant characters. Baker was a much more reserved man. He and his wife, Carol, were evangelical Christians. Cranborne resigned his parliamentary seat in 1987, only to come, at the behest of John Major, to the House of Lords as a senior minister. Spicer is not standing again for Parliament. And, on Saturday, Sir Nicholas Baker (he was named in the New Year's honours list and knighted last month) died after a protracted struggle with cancer. Thus has the heartland been broken.

Nicholas Baker was the son of a distinguished soldier. He, himself, served in the King's African Rifles, after he had graduated from Exeter College, Oxford. He was always a somewhat asocial man; and one of the meeting points between himself and James Spicer was their shared liking for physical exercise. Spicer founded the gymnasium in the House of Commons. Baker was an enthusiastic participant; after all, he did swim 93 lengths of the RAC pool. He was also an enthusiastic squash player, and competed regularly with Jeffrey Archer.

Baker trained as a solicitor. Having been editor of *Oxford Tory* in 1960, he set his eyes, like many of his ilk, on Conservative parliamentary preferment. Shortly after entering the House of Commons – at the

general election of 1979 – he secured appointment as Parliamentary Private Secretary to the then Minister of State for the Armed Forces, Peter Baker, and later as PPS to the Minister of State for Defence Procurement, Geoffrey Pattie, the Minister of State for Defence, Michael Heseltine, and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, Lord Young.

His most significant job, however, was as junior minister in the Home Office from 1994 to 1995. In that position he was charged with responsibility for policy on immigration. Unlike many other ministers – of either party – he undertook personally to review every single application of right of residence in the United Kingdom. It was also true that, as minister, he was hostile to a generous immigration policy, particularly in the Commonwealth, but his meticulous attention to decency meant that any application for residency would be carefully considered by the man in charge.

Baker held several posts in government, though none of them was senior. But, in his party, he did serve, for some time, as the main pairing whip; a pairing whip's job is to ensure that when a Member of any party either wants to be away from the House of Commons or is obliged by illness or distress to be away, that Member has made arrangements for a Member of an opposing party not to vote. Baker was renowned for his consideration for the problems of Members, either on his own side of the House or the other: it is as a kind, gentle, man that he will be remembered.

As Sir James Spicer, one of that West Country triumvirate, said yesterday, "He was the straightest man I have ever met in politics."

Patrick Cosgrave

Nicholas Brian Baker, solicitor and politician: born 23 November 1938; partner, Freere Cholmeley (Freere Cholmeley Biscoff) 1973-94; MP (Conservative) for North Dorset 1979-97; PPS to Minister of State for the Armed Forces 1981-83; to Minister of State for Defence Procurement 1983-84; to Secretary of State for Defence 1984-86; to Secretary of State for Trade and Industry 1987-88; an Assistant Government Whip 1989-90; a Lord Commissioner of HM Treasury (Government Whip) 1990-94; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Home Office 1994-95; Kt 1997; married 1970 Carol d'Abo (one son, one daughter); died 25 April 1997.



Baker: decency in politics



Rodríguez: bringing Paraguay out of isolation

## Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths

## BIRTHS

KEOGHE: On 12 April, at the Whittington Hospital, Islington, to Claire (nee Almet) and Kevin, a son, Edward William Patrick, a brother for Rachel.

## DEATHS

INNES: Row, scientist, teacher, socialist, died 22 April aged 82. Beloved husband of Pearl and proud, devoted father of Judith and father-in-law of Jet, a very special and talented man, loved and respected by his many friends. He will be much missed. Funeral at West Chapel, Golders Green Crematorium on Wednesday 30 April at 3pm. No flowers please. Donations to "Penbridge Centre Education Fund", c/o Leverton & Sons Ltd, 623 Finchley Road, London NW11 7RR.

STEWART: Professor W.A.C., formerly of Keele University, died suddenly on 23 April following an accident. Funeral planned for 2pm 1 May at Keele University Chapel followed by private cremation. Family flowers only but donations to Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture c/o Salt Undertakers, 28 Bridge Street, Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 2RY.

## Birthdays

Miss Ann-Margret, actress, 56; Mr Ian Beer, former Head Master, Harrow School, 86; Professor Hugh Beattall, cardiologist, 77; Mr Michael Brearley, cricketer, 67; Baroness Carole of Lour, educationalist and former commander, 72; Sir Ivor Cohen, former chairman, Barmby, 66; Commander Elizabeth Craig-McFady, former Director, WRNS, 70; Dr Kenneth Kaunda, former president of Zambia, 73; Miss Nicola LeFami, composer, 50; Sir John Leonard, former High Court judge, 71; Dr Michael Longfield, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Teesside, 69; The Right Rev Morris Maddocks, Hon Assistant Bishop, Chichester, 69; Mr William Moodie, Chief Constable, 66; Dr Jeffrey Tate, conductor, 54; Mr John Thora, writer and former Headmaster, Winchester College, 72; Mr Gary Weston, chairman, Associated British Foods, 70; Mrs Helen Williams, former High Mistress, St Paul's Girls' School, 59; Mr Kenneth Williams, Chief Constable, Norfolk, 53.

## Anniversaries

Births: Edward IV, King, 1442; Joan Audran, artist and engraver, 1667; James Monroe, fifth US president, 1758; Charles Sturt, explorer of Australia, 1875; Anthony Ashley Cooper, seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, statesman and philanthropist, 1801; Nikolai Aleksievich Titov, song composer, 1931; Sir James Erasmus Wilson, dermatologist, who, at his own expense, brought "Cleopatra's Needle" to London, 1809; Anastasius Drezner, composer, 1845; Frances Mary Hodgkins, painter, 1869; Harold Bauer, pianist, 1873; Lionel

Barrymore (Blythe), actor, 1878; Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, prime minister and dictator of Portugal, 1889; Adolphe Anthony Gossens, born player, 1896; Oskar Schindler, businessman and humanitarian, 1908; Reg Butler (Reginald Catterall B.), metal sculptor, 1913; Beatrice Thomas Betterton, actor, 1710; John Abernethy, surgeon, 1831; Sir Charles Bell, poet, novelist and critic, 1853; Johannes Peter Muller, physiologist, 1858; Arthur Fitzwilliam Tait, artist, 1905; Gavril Princip, Bosnian revolutionary and assassin, 1918; Sir Alexander Campbell Mackenzie, composer, 1935; Fund I, King of Egypt, 1936; Luisa Tetrizzi, soprano, 1940; Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini, executed by Italian partisans 1945; Richard Arthur Warren Hughes, novelist, 1976; Ed (Edward James) Begley, actor, 1970; Francis Bacon, painter, 1992; Oliver Messiaen, composer and organist, 1992. On this day: the foundation stone of Salisbury Cathedral was laid, 1220; the Spaniards defeated a French fleet and won a decisive victory at the Battle of Cerignola, 1538; Pope Clement XII issued a bull condemning Freemasonry, 1788; Captain Cook landed at, and named, Botany Bay and New South Wales, 1770; the crew of HMS *Bounty*, led by Fletcher Christian, mutinied, 1789; the Rush-Bagot Agreement was concluded between the US and Britain, 1817; the League of Nations was founded, 1919; Leslie Irvin made the first free-fall parachute descent, at Cook Field, Ohio, 1919; Farouk became King of Egypt, 1936; Thor Heyerdahl and companions set off from Peru on the *Kon-Tiki* expedition, 1947; Japan regained its sovereignty, 1952; General de Gaulle resigned

as president of France, 1969; US forces were sent to the Dominican Republic to protect US citizens and prevent a Communist revolution, 1965; Anwar al-Sadat was appointed acting president of Egypt, 1970. Today is the Feast Day of St Crocus of Rossos, St Cyril of Turo, St Louis Grignon of Montfort, St Pamphilus of Sulmona, St Peter Mary Chanel, St Pollio, Saints Theodora and Didyma, St Valeria and St Vitalis.

## Royal Over-Seas League

The Annual General Meeting of the Royal Over-Seas League will be held at 6.30pm on Tuesday 6 May 1997, at Over-Seas House, St James's Street, London SW1.

## Schools

St Mary's Convent, Weybridge. An Afternoon for Old Girls, former staff and friends will be held at St Mary's Convent, Weybridge, on 7 June 1997 at 3.30pm, to say "Good-bye" to the Sisters. Please write to St Mary's Murphy for information.

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, President, British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, visits Grenfell, Rylands Street, Bursley, Lancashire; at Furness, the Butler Trust, visits Lancashire; and Stone Row Head, Lancashire; and opens the new Chorley and South Ribbleside District General Hospital, Chorley, Lancashire.

## Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am: the 1st Battalion, the Royal Regiment of Wales mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, hand provided by the Coldstream Guards.

The following notes of judgments were prepared by the reporters of the *All England Reports*.

## Valuation

*N v C* CA 139/96. L1, Sir Ralph Gibson 21 Feb 1997. Where a value had been appointed by a court in matrimonial proceedings and it was alleged that the value had been vitiated by negligence, the correct procedure was not to bring proceedings alleging professional negligence against the valuer but to apply to the court which had made the original order. That was the forum in which any correction should be made since an alteration to the value would disadvantage one of the parties to the matrimonial proceedings. Furthermore, on the husband's application for a ruling as to the correct value of the property concerned, the district judge had no power to alter the figure arrived at by the valuer. Lord Manton QC (Vizard) for the valuer; the respondent in person.

## VAT

*Customs & Excise Comrs v British Fields Sports Society*; QBD (Hildes) 21 March 1997. The campaigning activities of the society were to be treated as business activities in respect of which VAT paid could be claimed as input tax. The activities (which were not within

the Value Added Tax Act 1994, s 94(2)(a) and (3)) were undertaken as consideration for the members' subscriptions.

*Robert Jay (C&E) for the Crown; Andrew Park QC and Apsara Nathan (Knight, Tisbury, Wilt) for the taxpayer.*

*Roghill Group Ltd v Customs & Excise Comrs*; CA (Sir Richard Scott VC, Hobhouse LJ, Mummery LJ) 23 April 1997. VAT on goods bought at a reduced price by a "hostess" who gave a party at which the taxpayer's goods were sold was to be accounted for at the full retail price. That was the reduced price plus the amount of the reduction which reflected the consideration for the hostess's services in providing the party.

*Andrew Park QC, Hugh McKay (Shakespeare, Birmingham) for the taxpayer; Stephen Richards (C&E) for the Crown.*

## Insolvency

*Re Mid East Trading Ltd*; ChD (Ewens-Lowe LJ) 18 April 1997. A stranger to a liquidation had no locus standi to apply to the court to rescind a winding-up order. *Michael Crystal QC, Robin Dicker (Lewell White Durran) for the liquidator; Susan Prewer (Derran Hall) for the petitioning creditor; Michael Brindle QC (Freshfields) for the respondents.*

## CASE SUMMARIES

28 April 1997

## Education

*R v East Sussex County Council, ex p Bandy*; QBD Crown Office List (Keene J) 23 April 1997.

A local education authority, in determining what were "suitable arrangements" for a child who was unable to attend school by reason of illness, had to decide the matter using an objective test reflecting the individualised concept in s 298(7) of the Education Act 1993 and not one which varied according to the financial means of the provider.

*Tim Kerr (Bates, Wells & Braithwaite) for the applicant; Rabinder Singh (Council Solicitor) for the council.*

## Crime

*R v Jones (Keith); CA (Cr Div), (The Vice-President (Rose LJ), Stuart White, Asplin JJ) 11 April 1997.*

The Crown had relied on the evidence of a forensic scientist that the substance found in the possession of the appellant appeared to contain cocaine of the highest purity. The court stated that the sooner prosecuting authorities took to heart the observations of Lord MacKay in *R v Hunt* [1987] AC 352, as to the desirability of clarity the better. That clarity could be achieved by the simplest form of words,

whether by reference expressly to para 2 of Sched 5 to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, or by other means. *Charles Salter (Registrar of Criminal Appeals) for the applicant; Nicholas A. Peacock (CPS) for the Crown.*

## Road Traffic

*DPF v DPF*; QBD Div Ct (McCowan LJ, Popplewell J) 15 April 1997. An offence under s 5 of the Road Traffic Act 1988, of driving a motor vehicle having consumed so much alcohol that the prescribed limit was exceeded, was an offence of strict liability requiring no proof of mens rea. As the accused's state of mind was irrelevant to the commission of the offence, there was no possibility of raising a defence of insanity.

*Nicholas Dean (CPS) for the DPF; the respondent did not appear and was not represented.*

## Dangerous Dogs

*Raffi v DPF*; QBD Div Ct (Auld LJ, Popplewell J) 22 April 1997. The fact that a dog attacked without prior warning was of itself capable of being conduct giving grounds for a reasonable apprehension that it would injure someone, for the purposes of s 3(1) of the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991. *Tania Panagiotopoulou (Caiger & Co, Ash) for the appellant; Jeffrey Jupp (CPS) for the Crown.*

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business

# Not much ado in the markets over the prospect of a Labour win

By the end of this week Tony Blair, judging by the opinion polls, will be installed at Number 10 and the stock market will have to get accustomed to living with a Labour government.

For many earning their living from the market and for many private investors it will be their first experience of anyone other than the Tories in power. The market view is that a Blair administration will herald only a minor shift in economic policy; hence the laid-back attitude displayed by Footsie during what little blood and thunder the election campaign has so far produced.

In days gone by overseas investors took flight at the prospect of Labour in power. This time there has been, so far, hardly a perceptible ripple of unease.

Equities have been much more preoccupied with the highways and byways explored by Wall Street than anything

quite so mundane as a domestic election.

Only last year at least one of the big US investment houses was fretting about Labour's impact on the market. It drew attention to the companies where US investors have established strong positions and raised questions about the danger of them dumping their shares if the Tories were ousted.

Any comment these days is much more restrained. Goldman Sachs, the US house, says it would "remain underweight" in equities but "remains reasonably constructive" on gilts. It expects any new government to increase interest rates, probably next week, and suggests a summertime budget to take the heat out of the economy.

Goldman's equities caution is, however, possibly only short-term. Its underweight position is "until the current phase of rising base rates/sterling is over".

Since John Major signalled the rush to polling day, Footsie has performed remarkably well, losing 544 points from what was a near peak.

One factor has been the seeming inevitability of the poll result. This has meant opinion polls have had hardly any impact on the market's performance, with last week's survey poll showing a sharp narrowing of Labour's lead making no discernible impression.

Whether the reality of Labour in power will continue to produce such a sanguine response remains to be seen.

Utilities must be vulnerable. A one-off windfall tax, of say, £5bn, seems to have been factored into share prices. There is also confusion about the number of privatised companies due to be caught in the net, for example, it is not yet clear if BT, an important world telecom player, and Railtrack?

If the windfall tax goes much beyond £5bn, say to £15bn, or



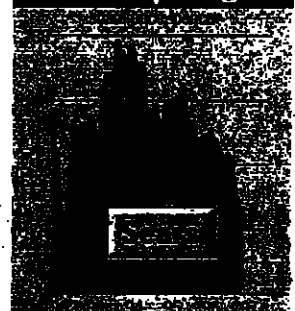
## STOCK MARKET WEEK

### DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

becomes a regular cash flow for a hard-up Labour administration then the market's calculations will have to be redrafted.

#### Share spotlight



There must also be some concern about the foreshadowed changes in the regulatory and environmental climates the utilities will face. They are bound to erode profits.

The market will also have to contend with higher taxes. Income tax, after the pledges, should be safe for a while. But company tax seems destined to increase, upsetting institutional investors. Tinkering with some other aspects of the Tory tax regime, perhaps PEPs, must be a possibility.

Such tax moves could, of course, swallow the fears of foreign investors even a modest trickle of overseas selling would quickly unsettle the market.

Forecasts of Footsie's level in a year's time remain largely bullish. Nomura is on 5,000 points and NatWest Securities looks for 4,700. Legal & General has one of the more downbeat predictions, even so its caution only stretches to a 4,200 figure.

Dominating a short list of company results is Sears, the sad, struggling retailer which presents year's profits tomorrow. Almost every Sears board meeting these days attracts speculation about the future of the chain's beleaguered chief executive Liam Strong and the possibility of a break-up.

The figures will, by general consent, be awful. They were trailed when Sears made what was a disastrous Christmas trading statement.

In the past year the sprawling retail group has expanded the fiasco of its on-off shoe shops sale and the shambles over the sale of its mail order operation.

Profits are likely to emerge at £55m against a depressed £74.4m. Do not be surprised if the dividend is cut, although most expect an unchanged payment of 3.95p a share.

There is just a chance the group will produce the unexpected in a bid to mollify disgruntled shareholders. Could it, perhaps, offer a plan to demerge its prestigious (and highly profitable) Selfridges department store? Or perhaps another shoe shops deal is in the wind.

One thing seems certain. With the Monopolies and Mergers Commission just getting its investigation into the planned Freemans sale under way there will not be any surprises on the mail order front.

NatWest Securities calculate a break-up value of 81p. The retail group has expanded the fiasco of its on-off shoe shops sale and the shambles over the sale of its mail order operation.

where demerger talk persists. As the continuing tobacco litigation saga becomes increasingly confused the case for splitting the financial and tobacco sides grows stronger.

But, in the short term at least, BAT seems to have set its face against any split. The two constituents will produce higher profits when first-quarter results are presented on Wednesday. It is estimated the smoking side, thanks largely to higher prices, will lift profits by around 8 per cent and the financial division's gain will, in percentage terms, not be far behind. Total pre-tax figure is likely to be just over £600m against last time's £566m.

Another giant, Shell Transport & Trading, also offers first-quarter results. On Thursday earnings should emerge at £1.55bn, a 17 per cent decline on the same period last year, but, despite lower oil prices, a little above the final quarter of 1996.

#### Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Ex rights: Ex rights: Ex dividends: Ex all UK Unlisted Securities Market a Suspended Price Paid per share. Ex all UK Unlisted Securities Market a Suspended Price Paid per share. Ex all UK Unlisted Securities Market a Suspended Price Paid per share.

Source: FT Information

#### The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0800 123 333, and when prompted to do so, enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0800 123 333 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0800 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline 071 875 4376 (9.00am - 5.00pm). Calls cost 80p per minute. Call charges include VAT.

#### Interest Rates

	UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base	6.00%	5.00%	5.25%	5.75%
Prime	6.00%	5.00%	5.25%	5.75%
Discount	5.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%
3-Month	5.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%
6-Month	5.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%
12-Month	5.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%

#### Oil Exploration

Oil Exploration

Oil Exploration

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Company	Price	Change	Volume	Market
Alcoholic Beverages				
Diageo	120.00	+1.00	100	FTSE 100
Heineken	85.00	+0.50	50	FTSE 100
Guinness	70.00	+0.20	20	FTSE 100
Banks, Merchant				
Barclays	150.00	+1.50	150	FTSE 100
HSBC	140.00	+1.00	120	FTSE 100
Bank of Scotland	130.00	+0.80	80	FTSE 100
Banks, Retail				
First Direct	120.00	+1.00	100	FTSE 100
Halifax	110.00	+0.50	60	FTSE 100
Bank of Ireland	100.00	+0.30	40	FTSE 100
Breweries, Pubs & Rest				
Asahi	90.00	+0.50	30	FTSE 100
Beck's	80.00	+0.40	20	FTSE 100
Carlsberg	70.00	+0.30	10	FTSE 100
Diversified Industrials				
Unilever	110.00	+0.80	90	FTSE 100
Roche	100.00	+0.70	80	FTSE 100
Glaxo	90.00	+0.60	70	FTSE 100
Extractive Industries				
BP	120.00	+1.00	100	FTSE 100
Shell	110.00	+0.90	90	FTSE 100
British Petroleum	100.00	+0.80	80	FTSE 100
Food Manufacturers				
Unilever	110.00	+0.80	90	FTSE 100
Roche	100.00	+0.70	80	FTSE 100
Glaxo	90.00	+0.60	70	FTSE 100
Health Care				
Roche	100.00	+0.70	80	FTSE 100
Glaxo	90.00	+0.60	70	FTSE 100
Household Goods				
Unilever	110.00	+0.80	90	FTSE 100
Roche	100.00	+0.70	80	FTSE 100
Glaxo	90.00	+0.60	70	FTSE 100
Insurance				
Prudential	120.00	+1.00	100	FTSE 100
Aviva	110.00	+0.90	90	FTSE 100
Legal & General	100.00	+0.80	80	FTSE 100
Life Assurance				
Prudential	120.00	+1.00	100	FTSE 100
Aviva	110.00	+0.90	90	FTSE 100
Legal & General	100.00	+0.80	80	FTSE 100
Media				
Virgin Media	120.00	+1.00	100	FTSE 100
British Sky Broadcasting	110.00	+0.90	90	FTSE 100
Telecommunications				
British Telecom	120.00	+1.00	100	FTSE 100
Telecom Italia	110.00	+0.90	90	FTSE 100
Telefonica	100.00	+0.80	80	FTSE 100
Textiles & Apparel				
Next	120.00	+1.00	100	FTSE 100
Primark	110.00	+0.90	90	FTSE 100
Debenhams	100.00	+0.80	80	FTSE 100
Tobacco				
British American Tobacco	120.00	+1.00	100	FTSE 100
Imperial Tobacco	110.00	+0.90	90	FTSE 100
Transport				
British Airways	120.00	+1.00	100	FTSE 100
Virgin Atlantic	110.00	+0.90	90	FTSE 100
Support Services				
Unilever	110.00	+0.80	90	FTSE 100
Roche	100.00	+0.70	80	FTSE 100
Glaxo	90.00	+0.60	70	FTSE 100
Water				
Unilever	110.00	+0.80	90	FTSE 100
Roche	100.00	+0.70	80	FTSE 100
Glaxo	90.00	+0.60	70	FTSE 100



# business & city

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## Green sacked as Co-op fires off more letters

John Willcock

The Co-operative Wholesale Society (CWS) has fired off another batch of incendiary letters, one each to suspended executives Allan Green and David Chambers, whom it sacked on Friday, and another to Travers Smith Braithwaite, the law firm representing Andrew Regan's failed £1.2bn bid.

The CWS accuses the law firm of "a serious error of professional judgement".

In a whirlwind of legal activity, the CWS has written to the London Stock Exchange demanding an immediate enquiry into the possibility of insider dealing in the shares of Mr Regan's Lantica trust.

The CWS has also written to the Department of Trade and Industry, the Bank of England and the Serious Fraud Office concerning the affair, while its lawyers have written to all 17 companies that were shown confidential CWS information by the Regan camp.

There were press reports yesterday that the Regan camp intends to put Galileo, its vehicle for the CWS bid, into voluntary liquidation. No comment was available from Galileo.

It emerged yesterday that CWS company secretary Roger Jones wrote to Mr Green on Friday to inform him of his "summary dismissal forthwith".

The sacking followed the high court hearing that morning at which Mr Justice Lightman banned Andrew Regan and his associates from using seven boxes of confidential CWS documents provided by Mr Green to Mr Regan. Mr Green and Mr Chambers were both suspended by the CWS on 18 April.

Mr Jones wrote that Mr Green's sacking "follows the sordid facts revealed in your recent affidavit and those of Messrs Regan, Lyons (David Lyons, Mr Regan's business partner) and others of betrayal of the CWS, your colleagues and loyal staff".

"I can only say that I agree totally with Mr Justice Lightman who referred to 'the clear evidence of a gross, wilful and disgraceful breach of confidence'."

Mr Jones added: "You are required to return your car and any other CWS property immediately."

The CWS letter to David Chambers referred to his "close association with Mr AA Green", which made it impossible to separate them in the context of Mr Green's "recent betrayal of CWS". Mr Jones added: "There is evidence of your recent contact with Mr Regan which you failed to explain adequately when given the opportunity to do so on the 18th [of April]."

Mr Chambers was also required to return his car.

On Saturday, Graham Melmoth, chief executive of the CWS, wrote to Alan Keat, senior partner at City law firm Travers Smith Braithwaite, referring to an article in *The Independent* on Saturday.

Mr Melmoth wrote: "I see that a public relations firm, said to be acting on your behalf, rang [The Independent] on Friday and told them that the

'stuff put out by Melmoth... was a distraction, a sideshow' to the CWS's poor performance."

"You add serious insult to the injury which you have already caused to us."

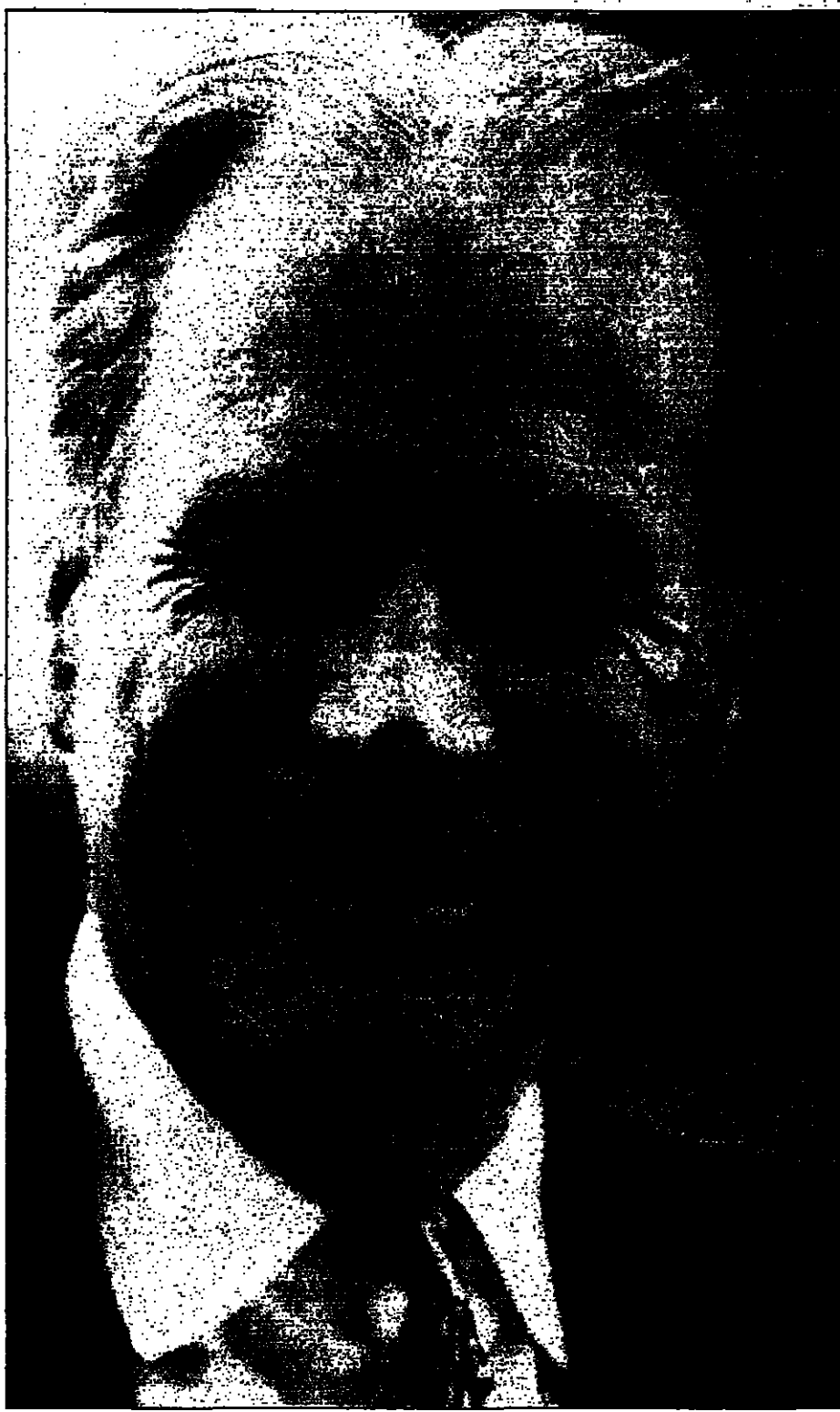
Mr Melmoth then points out: "One of your most senior partners had sensitive and highly confidential CWS board minutes on his files. Anyone who could read would have known that they were confidential to the CWS... did he satisfy himself that the documents had come from a legitimate source or by a legitimate means?"

The CWS boss concludes: "The conduct of your firm in this débâcle is certainly not a 'distraction' nor a 'sideshow'. If you believe this to be so, you are making a serious error of professional judgement."

The CWS is particularly incensed by suggestions that it is still "in play". Mr Melmoth said on Friday that the mutually owned organisation was "not for sale under any circumstances".

Over the weekend press reports suggested that Crédit Suisse First Boston was interested in bidding for the CWS. Sainsbury's said during Mr Regan's bid attempt that it was interested in buying some CWS food stores, while Allied Irish Bank also said it wanted to buy the Co-op Bank.

Yesterday a CWS spokesman reiterated its stance that the group was not for sale, saying the board accepted it needed to improve the group's performance, and that a strategic review started last November should be completed later this year.



On the attack: Graham Melmoth has questioned Travers Smith Braithwaite's judgement

## Dollar set to climb despite G7 concerns

Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

The outcome of the meeting of ministers and central bankers from the Group of Seven (G7) industrial countries in Washington yesterday is unlikely to have any lasting impact on exchange rates, analysts said.

Most expect the dollar to continue its rise against the Japanese and German currencies, even if it dips today in reaction to threats of co-ordinated action to realign exchange rates.

The possibility of a concerted move to restrain the dollar was given credence by a meeting between Japanese Finance Minister Hiroshi Mitsuoka and Robert Rubin, the US Treasury Secretary, early yesterday.

An official said later both men shared concerns over the yen, which has been weak for some time, adding that they had reaffirmed their commitment to co-operate closely in exchange markets as appropriate.

A separate G7 recommendation on altering the International Monetary Fund's articles to require members to aim for full liberalisation of capital flows is expected to be approved by the IMF today.

Philippe Maystadt, Belgium's finance minister who heads the IMF's interim committee, said on Saturday: "There is an agreement on the broad principle that capital movement liberalisation is beneficial and the Fund could have a useful role in promoting free capital movements."

However, while member states are expected to give the green light to a new allocation of special drawing rights, the IMF's international "currency",

to states who have joined since the last issue in 1981, an increase in contributions from older members may prove elusive.

Mr Maystadt said they were close to an agreement on the size of allocation, but added that he did not expect any consensus on increased contributions. Michel Camdessus, IMF managing director, originally asked for double the current rate, but discussions are now thought to be centring on raising them by between 35 and 65 per cent. Any agreements will be put to the Fund's annual meeting in the autumn for final approval.

In the run-up to the G7 meeting, US and Japanese politicians indicated they would have liked to see this weekend produce another statement of intent to prevent the dollar from rising any further. It is up more than 2 per cent against the yen and 3 per cent against the German mark since the G7 said the same thing in February.

Robert Rubin, US Treasury secretary, indicated last week that an increase in Japan's trade surplus with the US would be undesirable. "I think it's very much in their interest and the interest of everybody, and we'll all be watching that very closely," he said.

The weak yen has boosted Japanese exports, but other G7 countries are likely to urge the Japanese government to ensure domestic demand also plays its part in economic growth.

However, most analysts do not expect significant intervention on exchange rates, and do not think it would necessarily work anyway. The currency markets will respond to the possibility of increases in US interest rates.

### IN BRIEF

#### UK recovery on a 'knife edge'

The real level of UK corporate profitability, after allowing for inflation, has fallen for the first time in five years, showing the economy is on a "knife edge", according to a report out today. The survey by CCN Group, an information services company, warns that sterling's strength, skills shortages and weak capital investment are having an adverse effect on profitability. A North/South divide is re-emerging, with profitability in the South generally much stronger than in the North and Scotland. CCN warns all politicians making up the next government that policies which upset the balance - whether raising interest rates or increasing taxes, social costs or government spending - or discouraging inward investment will cause the recovery of the last three years to unravel.

#### Two charged with insurance fraud

Martin Garvey, chief executive officer of Redholm Underwriting Agents, and Ronald Macroe, former executive director of Leumi Insurance Services (UK), were charged with frauds totalling £1.2m at City of London Magistrates Court last week. The charges were brought by the City of London Police. Both men were released on bail with sureties to reappear before City magistrates on 24 July. Mr Garvey and Mr Macroe were charged with conspiracy to defraud Axa Global Risks UK, Leumi Insurance Services (UK) and Aviafrance, Paris, in relation to the placement of reinsurance risks between 1991 and 1995. Mr Garvey was also charged with conspiring to defraud Firstcity Insurance Brokers.

#### DLJ Phoenix poaches NatWest star

DLJ Phoenix has poached Margaret Young from NatWest Markets Corporate Finance. The move is the first in an ambitious hiring programme, following the purchase of Phoenix Securities two months ago by Donaldson Lufkin and Jenrette. Wall Street's second-biggest corporate finance house, Ms Young joined NWM in 1985, having gained an MBA at London Business School and qualified as a chartered accountant with Coopers & Lybrand. She recently led teams that successfully defended William Cook from Triplex Lloyd, and Amec from Kvaerner. "There are plenty more signings to come," a DLJ Phoenix spokesman said last night.

#### All Star Cafe to open in London

Tiger Woods, the hottest property in golf following his recent victory in the US Masters at Augusta, is among the superstars behind the Official All Star Cafe, which will open its first restaurant in the UK next year. The chain is the brain child of Robert Earl, and forms part of his Planet Hollywood empire. The London restaurant will seat 300 people and will be housed in three floors of the Pepsi Trocadero in Piccadilly Circus. The first All Star Cafe opened in New York's Times Square in December 1995. There are now five restaurants in the US and one in Australia. The group is understood to be talking to Alan Shearer and Michael Schumacher about joining the list of celebrity shareholders, which already includes Andre Agassi, Monica Seles and Joe Montana.

## Business leaders declare support for Labour

John Willcock

Seven leading businessmen who have never voted Labour before have written an open letter to be published today which backs Tony Blair and New Labour.

According to the Labour Party yesterday, the letter was organised by Alec Reed, chairman of Reed Personnel Services and one of its signatories. It is a response to a previous open letter published last week in support of the Conservatives and

signed by 38 company chiefs, which said that "Labour can't be trusted".

Today's pro-Labour letter would seem to testify to the success of New Labour's "prawn cocktail offensive" in the City in which the party has worked hard to dispel its image of high taxation and high spending.

Signatories to today's pro-Labour letter include Alan Sugar, chairman of Amstrad, Gerry Robinson, chairman of Granada, Sir Trevor Chinn,

chairman of Lex Service, and Ronald Cohen, chairman of Apex Partners.

The letter is also signed by Paul Rose, managing director of Everse Business Consultants and Paul Nesbitt, managing director of Mistal Time Services.

The seven businessmen wrote: "In the past, we have not voted Labour. We believed that re-electing the Conservatives or voting Liberal offered the best hope for this country and for business. We will not be voting

Conservative or Liberal on 1 May but backing New Labour for the same reasons."

The business leaders say they recognise that improvements have been made in the last five years but believe there is much more that needs to be done. "We do not have the confidence that the present Government could meet these challenges."

They write that the country needs a government which understands the importance of education, skills and training in

the global marketplace. They say they believe Labour can close the skills deficit with Britain's competitors.

The letter becomes positively florid when talking about Tony Blair's modernisation of the party: "He has shown he instinctively understands our future economic prosperity depends upon innovation, entrepreneurial dynamism and equipping our country with new skills."

The letter concludes: "Tony Blair's vision and leadership

qualities have convinced us to vote New Labour on 1 May. And it is why we have put our personal support on record."

Separately, a survey of 315 business managers to be published today suggests that both Tory and Labour campaigning has had no impact on voters' intentions. Eighty-five per cent of managers surveyed said the campaign has done nothing to change the way they intend to vote, according to the Institute of Management.

## Shake-up at MEPC may lead to sell-offs

Magnus Grimond

MEPC, the property group which recently ended merger discussions with its rival Hamptons, has launched a shake-up of its business which could see parts being sold or floated off later this year.

The move is an attempt by James Tuckey, chief executive, to revitalise the group after pressure from big shareholders dissatisfied with the company's lacklustre performance against rivals like British Land.

The break-up proposals are being seen as a logical extension of the reorganisation of the group into four business divisions instigated by Mr Tuckey last September. That saw the UK operations divided into four "vertically integrated" groups, namely retail, including leisure, small properties, industrial and offices.

The new arrangement would make it easier to float off or sell

parts of the business, but it is being stressed that nothing is imminent. One insider said over the weekend: "They have got the option to hive off any of the four if that would add value. What they are not saying is that they are about to do this because all these bid rumours are around."

One possible candidate for separation is the smaller properties operation, which has been criticised for being too fragmented and poorly located, but is currently said to be doing well.

MEPC is also building up other parts of the group, which could leave them in better shape to stand on their own. Earlier this month, for instance, the retail side paid £80m for three factory outlet centres belonging to C&J Clark, the private shoe group.

Other parts where a demerger is on the cards include the US and the strongly per-

forming Australian arm. The group is also ready to entertain trade offers for its businesses.

The plans, on which the board is being advised by investment bank Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, are tentative at this stage. However, it is understood they do not encompass a full-scale, complete break-up of the group into six parts.

Mr Tuckey is aware that large shareholders, which include the Co-operative Insurance Society and PFD, are unhappy with the performance of their stake in MEPC.

They are thought to have led the pressure to open the talks with Hamptons and so the ending of discussions in January is only likely to have increased their unhappiness.

Signs that MEPC was taking such concerns seriously emerged with plans that the group was undertaking a massive outsourcing exercise to reduce costs.

## Beleaguered Sears stays silent on future of Strong

Magnus Grimond

Sears, the troubled Selfridges to Deol's retailing group, was tight-lipped yesterday over a report that Liam Strong, its chief executive, was about to step down with a pay-off of up to £500,000.

A spokesman for the company refused to comment on the report, but City analysts suggested that his position was growing increasingly untenable in the face of the continuing series of disasters at the group.

Mr Strong, who has been under intense pressure from shareholders to improve the group's performance, will on Tuesday unveil a new round of radical restructuring proposals alongside Sears' results for the year to January.

It is expected that profits will be wiped out by huge charges to cover the cost of shutting down parts of the British Shoe Corporation retailing operation.

One analyst said yesterday that the Shoe Express chain, a brainchild of Mr Strong, was "spiralling into disaster".

Plans to split the group into shoes, fashion retailing and the highly successful Selfridges department store are also widely forecast to be the precursor for a break-up of the whole group. If the task is not completed by Sears' current management, others are thought to be waiting in the wings to do the job for them.

UBS, the Swiss investment bank whose fund management arm PFD holds a large stake in Sears, is rumoured to have spent several weeks attempting to line up potential bidders for the group.

After the wave of speculation

which has engulfed Sears and the future of Mr Strong over the past months, the board and its advisers were last week sworn to secrecy ahead of the annual figures. However, one insider said over the weekend: "Most people think there will be radical action and there are not that many options to take."

Finding a resolution to the problems in shoes was clearly a priority, he added.

Mr Strong's situation has been made more uncomfortable by the on-off negotiations to sell its Freemans mail order business. The weekend report suggests a deal with Littlewoods, the original buyer, will be unveiled on Tuesday, but it is unlikely to be on such advantageous terms as before.

STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
	Index	Close	Week's chg	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Ytd (%)		
FTSE 100	4369.70	+59.2	+1.4	4444.30	4096.60	3.70			
FTSE 250	4600.50	-17.2	-0.4	4729.40	4469.40	3.56			
FTSE 350	2143.00	+21.5	+1.0	2194.30	2017.90	3.67			
FTSE SmallCap	2236.67	+2.6	+0.1	2374.20	2178.29	3.04			
FTSE All-Share	2112.15	+19.7	+0.9	2163.94	1988.78	3.62			
New York	6738.87	+35.3	+0.5	7085.18	5032.94	1.82			
Dax	18612.86	+260.7	+1.4	19446.00	17303.65	0.951			
Hong Kong	12645.76	+104.6	+0.8	13888.24	12055.17	3.291			
Frankfurt	3377.27	+32.9	+1.0	3460.59	2848.77	1.581			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates									
	Rate	1 year	Medium Term	Long Term	10 year	30 year			
UK	5.19	7.0	7.67	7.99	7.75	8.10			
US	5.56	8.31	6.94	6.59	7.14	8.84			
Japan	0.53	0.75	2.27	2.41	-	-			
Germany	3.13	3.28	5.92	6.37	6.68	-			
Bond Yields (%)									
	1 year	2 year	3 year	5 year	10 year	30 year			
UK	5.19	7.0	7.67	7.99	7.75	8.10			
US	5.56	8.31	6.94	6.59	7.14	8.84			
Japan	0.53	0.75	2.27	2.41	-	-			
Germany	3.13	3.28	5.92	6.37	6.68	-			
MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
	Price	1c	10c	10c	10c	10c			
BK of Scotland	352.5	27	8.3	Ashted/Lauralabs	106	32.5	23.5		
Hays	561	42	8.1	Molins	852.5	92.6	12.4		
Barclays	1088.5	78.5	7.8	Camplight	469.5	55.5	10.6		

CURRENCIES									
£/\$									
	Close	Week's chg	Year Ago						
\$ (London)	1.6213	+0.02c	1.5114						
\$ (NY)	1.6245	-0.05c	1.5080						
DM (London)	2.7997	-0.19p	2.3116						
¥ (London)	205.503	+0.832	160.982						
£ Index	99.8	+0.1	84.3						
OTHER INDICATORS									
	Close	Week's chg	Year Ago						
Oil Brent \$	18.15	+0.3	18.84						
Gold \$	342.45	+0.75	364.35						
Gold £	210.99	+1.53	260.92						
Base Rates	-	-	6.00pc						

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GAVYN DAVIES

'By the end of the next Parliament Ken Clarke has planned for a budget surplus of 2 per cent of gross domestic product. This, it could be argued, is overkill'

# Taxes don't have to rise after the election

It is very difficult to pick up the economic section of a newspaper nowadays without reading that a large tax increase is "inevitable", if not immediately after the election, then certainly within the next year. The standard line is that the growth of public spending cannot be restricted to the rate set in the 1996 Budget plans, that the public sector borrowing requirement is too high for this stage of the cycle, and that the balance of fiscal and monetary policy needs to be altered so that the upward pressure can be removed from sterling. Once the need for fiscal action has been established, the next stage is to argue that a new government might as well bite the bullet early, following the example of the Howe budget of 1979, which doubled the rate of VAT just 10 weeks after Mrs Thatcher took office that year.

This column has previously argued that the Howe example is a red herring, since the 1979 package did not involve a significant tax increase, but instead switched the tax burden away from income tax and towards VAT. The broad intention to make this switch had been flagged in the election campaign, so the voters did not see the package as a betrayal of trust. But this time, the Labour campaign has in effect said the following: trust us, we are different; the Tories lied to you last time on tax; we see no reason to raise taxation to finance our programme; in fact, we would like to reduce the tax burden on ordinary families.

Obviously, these words should only be eaten if there is an absolutely overwhelming economic case for raising tax immediately. Although in the past couple of years I have usually leaned in the direction of tighter fiscal policy, and still so, I must admit that I do not see the need for higher taxes

now as by any means clear-cut. Let us take the main arguments in turn.

First, there is the claim that higher taxes are needed to finance extra public spending. Certainly, it is very difficult to imagine a Labour government - or any government - sticking to the planned growth of only 0.6 per cent per annum in real spending over the next five years, compared with the 1.6 per cent per annum which the Tories have averaged since 1980. But does this mean that taxes need to be raised? Not necessarily. By the end of the next Parliament, Ken Clarke has planned for a budget surplus of 2 per cent of gross domestic product. This, it could be argued, is overkill.

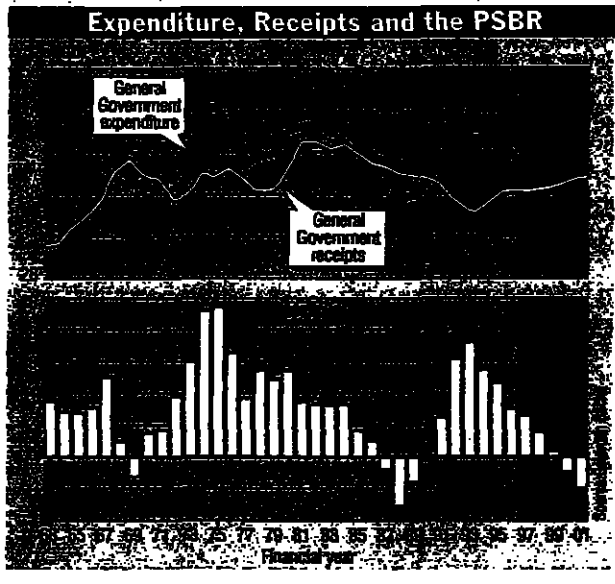
A budget deficit of, say, 1 per cent of GDP would be perfectly feasible, and the difference between these two figures would unlock an extra £27bn per annum for public spending. This is equivalent to 7.6 per cent of the spending total, and if this extra growth were spread evenly over five years, it would take the real growth in spending in the next Parliament to over 3 per cent per annum. Although this might still not be enough, the need for higher taxation to fund expenditure suddenly does not look quite so compelling. (This extra £27bn does, of course, put into context the trivial election debate about a few halfpennies here and there to replace privatisation receipts, reduce class sizes etc.)

The second argument for higher taxes, though, is that a budget deficit of 1 per cent of

GDP by the end of the next Parliament is not acceptable, since the economy will by then be working well above its normal capacity, and the PSBR should be more than entirely eliminated in periods of boom. In principle, this is absolutely correct, but on the basis of the Treasury projections, it is not clear that the economy will in fact be above trend in 2002. The Budget Red Book shows GDP returning to trend in 1998/99, and then remaining exactly at trend for the rest of the planning horizon. (In alternative language, the output gap will be zero in those years.)

Clearly, the government should aim to fix the PSBR exactly equal to its long-term

objective in years when GDP is at trend. What should this long-term objective actually be? Gordon Brown is committed both to stabilising the public debt ratio, and to achieving the "golden rule" by ensuring that public borrowing does not exceed public investment. These criteria require the PSBR to be 2.5 per cent of GDP, and 1 per cent of GDP, respectively, as an appropriate long-term objective. Thus even on the more restrictive of these two objectives, the budget surplus shown in the Red Book represents overkill, and the £27bn extra spending in 2002 seems feasible.



There is one very important caveat to this conclusion, however. No one actually knows for sure where the true output gap is at any given time. If it turns out that the economy is already working at or above trend, then on the Treasury growth projections, it will remain there for the whole of the planning horizon. This means that the PSBR should be below the 1 per cent target in these years, and that in turn would reduce the £27bn available for extra spending. But we will only find that out in some years' time, when we will have been able to observe whether inflation has started to rise. Until then, we simply will not be able to know for sure whether the underlying budget position really needs to be tightened by raising taxation.

Finally, what about the case for slowing the economy through tax rises rather than higher base rates? Clearly, the consumer does indeed need to be dampened

down, and equally clearly higher base rates will push sterling further into overvalued territory. But there are severe doubts about the suitability, and capability, of higher taxes to do the job of base rate increases. Fiscal policy is cumbersome in the extreme, and some economists are very dubious whether temporary changes in taxation, designed to dampen the economic cycle, will have much impact on the spending pattern of rational consumers. They may simply vary their savings behaviour to iron out the impact of tax changes, leaving the path for consumption largely untouched.

Certainly, attempts to model the relative impact of monetary and fiscal policy on economic activity usually suggest that the former dominates the latter. In the present circumstances, the tax change needed to bring consumer spending down to an acceptable rate would be very large indeed. Consumers' expenditure this year is rising at over 4 per cent.

To cut this growth rate to an acceptable 2.5 per cent through raising taxes, the chancellor would need to hike the personal tax burden by more than £8bn in his first Budget, and then hope that consumers did not attempt to thwart him by eating into their savings - or by spending a larger proportion of their £20bn building society windfall this year. So uncertain is the impact of this windfall that there is an overwhelming case for the policy response to be the most flexible possible, and that must mean interest rates, not taxes.

One final point. Even without tax increases, the fiscal stance will tighten by more than 0.7 per cent of GDP next year because of the tightness of the public spending plans. Maybe that is good enough.

## Harsh US capitalism 'heading for UK'

Magnus Grimmond

A new and harsher form of US capitalism which rewards fund managers with tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars in share options while holding down ordinary workers' pay is set to spread to Europe, according to one of the City's most respected economists.

Douglas McWilliams, the former chief economic adviser to the Confederation of British Industry, claims in a new report published today that the recent

outperformance of the US economy is due to a "transformation in the operation of capitalism on a sufficient scale to justify being described as a reinvention".

Professor McWilliams said there has been an "explosion" in mutual funds, the US equivalent of unit trusts, which are now owned by 37 per cent of American households, compared with under 6 per cent in 1980. The managers of such funds are so heavily incentivised that their outstanding

share options are thought to be worth between 10 and 15 per cent of the value of the whole US equity market.

"They give them huge incentives. They are massive," Professor McWilliams says. "And so far they have generated the share price performance and the profits performance. The size of the carrot being dangled before them is one they really cannot ignore."

The result has been soaring US share prices and a gross domestic product which has grown

by 15.9 per cent in 1990s, compared with 10.9 per cent for Western Europe. At the same time, figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development show that return on capital has accelerated from an average of 13.5 per cent in the 1980s to 17.8 per cent during the 1990s so far and 18.5 per cent for 1996, according to the latest estimate.

But this performance has been achieved at the expense of wages, which have risen by 22.4 per cent in the years 1990-96 in

the US, below the 24 per cent increase in consumer prices. By contrast, earnings in the European Union expanded by 39.5 per cent in that period, some 16.3 percentage points faster than prices.

"Real pay is rising a lot less fast than productivity [in the US] and the surplus is being handed over to profits... If that is seen to work as it is seen to work in US financial markets, there will be pressure to extend it to Europe and to the UK in particular."

## Smaller firms' exports suffer

John Willcock

Export orders for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) fell at their fastest rate since October 1992 over the last four months because of the strong pound.

According to the latest SME report by the Confederation of British Industry and the accountants Pannell Kerr Forster published today, there was a negative balance of 8 per cent of SMEs reporting a fall in export demand, despite positive prior expectations.

In contrast, SMEs matched the rest of the UK's manufacturing industry in attracting new orders and improving output over the past four months.

The survey also finds that the trend in SME domestic prices and investment intentions is below that of UK manufacturers as a whole, but their employment performance has been better.

Over the past four months total orders received by SMEs have continued to grow moderately, with a further pick-up expected. A positive balance of

6 per cent of SMEs reported an increase in domestic orders - a slower increase than in the four months to January.

Manufacturing output for SMEs increased at a similar rate to January's survey, with a positive balance of 10 per cent of firms reporting a rise over the past four months. Over the next four months, output is expected to pick up further, although expectations have not been fully realised since April 1995.

Domestic prices for SMEs fell for the fourth successive quarterly survey.

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## back page: the week starts here

IN THE  
INDEPENDENT  
THIS WEEK

## FILM

**Screaming  
with Wes  
Craven**



## POP

**Singing with  
U2**

**THEATRE**  
**Soloquising  
with Alex  
Jennings**



## BOOKS

**Sizzling with  
the Web**

**PLUS**  
**The Dublin  
Pinter  
Festival**

**The music of  
The English  
Patient**

## WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO SEE, WHAT TO DO

## THE ARTS

## Fresh air and fun

**Festival:** Brighton Festival, the largest multi-arts festival in England, second only to Edinburgh in the UK, begins this Saturday until 25 May with street theatre, including Plasticine Volants, part of the closing ceremony at the Barcelona Olympics (10 May 9:30pm Madeira Drive), New Sussex Opera performing *Danton's Death* (7/10 May 7:30pm £10-22.50 The Dome 01273 709709), the brilliant Rambert Dance Company with *New Ballet* (7-10 May 7:45pm £8-18 Theatre Royal 01273 328488). Academic Jacqueline Rose talks to novelist and academic Edward Said in *The Pen and the Sword* (14 May, 6pm £5 The Dome). Less politics, and more "rock" with Irvine Welsh in *Keeping Tabs on Trainspotting* and his other books (15 May 8pm £5 The Dome).

**Visual:** A collection of new paintings by David Hockney – the largest since his exhibition at the Tate in 1988/89 – opens at Annely Juda Fine Art in London from Thursday. It has more than 30 portraits and 18 still lifes never seen before and apparently inspired by his visit to the Vermeer exhibition in The Hague last year. Ends 19 July. Free Mon-Fri 10am-6pm Sat 10am-1pm 0171-629 7578

**Exhibition:** Bolton Wanderers have played their last game at Burnden Park, their home for 102 years, and head back into the Premiership in style as runaway champions and with a new stadium. An exhibition just opened at the Bolton Museum adds to the football/art crossover trend as well, with photos from down the years, works from contemporary artist Adam Beebe, plus casts of the present Bolton team's feet. 9:30am-5:30pm/Sat 10am-5pm Free 01204 522311

MAY DAY/WEEKEND  
EVENTS

## County customs

**Celebration:** Traditional goings-on at the Museum of Kent Life in Coburn, which is replete with old buildings and cost houses. It is one of the few places to have a traditional May Queen, crowned in the apple orchard at 1:30 on Sunday and Monday, as well as Morris dancing, a maypole and the pagan tradition of the Jack-in-the-green, the bringer of plenty and summer. 11am-4:30pm £3.80/£2.30 child and OAPs/£10 family 01622 763936

**Worms:** The "International Festival" of worm- charming in the village of Blackawton in Devon requires the more charismatic to charm worms to the surface. This year is a real challenge, as the moisture which helps bring them has been in short supply. The actual worming ceremony begins at 12noon (meet Normandy Arms). Free 01803 712316

**Flowers:** One of Britain's biggest festivals, attracting half a million visitors, is the Spalding Flower Show and Country Fair, in Lincolnshire, over the weekend, with 25 acres of show and landscaped gardens, massed tulip displays and hyacinths. The Flower Parade is at 2pm. £5(child - accomp free) 01775 724843

## AWARDS

## All eyes on Ireland

**Music:** The Eurovision Song Contest is upon us, hosted – yet again – by Ireland, who have done this for the last four out of five years. For the first time in its 42 years the viewers will be able to vote. Britain goes for it with Katrina and the Waves, singing "Love Shine". BBC1/Radio 2 8pm

**Awards:** Our very own (less glittering) Oscars, the Bafta Awards, can be seen on BBC1 tomorrow night after pre-recording at the Albert Hall earlier in the evening. Another chance for *The English Patient* to carry off all at la Oscar night, and a virtually identical nomination line-up, with the exception of interesting oddity, John Sayles's *Lone Star* (Best Screenplay) BBC1 10pm

## MUSIC

## Finns considered

**Classical:** The highly regarded Finn Osmo Vänskä conducts the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra in *The Sibelius Experience* – at the City Hall, Glasgow on Thursday they perform Sibelius's epic 5th Symphony, along with British premieres for his tone poem *The Wood Nymph* and Jan Sanderström's *Don Quixote de la Mancha*, in which "trumpeters must disrobe from pantaloons to hose, ooze mock Lorcán cante jondo, wheeze, flail and mutter as toothlessly as Roy Dotrice's John Aubrey". 7:30pm £8-15 Stand-by concs £4.50 (school-children £4) 0141 287 5511

**Pop/Film:** London first-ever music week has live events every night at over 40 venues with The Levellers at Brixton Academy (Fri balcony only 9pm £12.50 0171-924 9999) and Warren G at the Forum (Thurs 15 9pm 0181-863 0940). A film festival, *Music Meets the Movies*, is running in conjunction at Islington's Screen on the Green, with the Muhammad Ali documentary *When We Were Kings* – featuring James Brown, B B King and The Fugees (Thursday 9:05pm). Diana Ross presents *Out of Darkness* today 7:10pm plus *Beavis & Butt-head Do America* (Thursday 5:15pm).

**Pop:** The Heineken Green Energy Festival in Dublin begins on Thursday with the incomparable Beck playing Dublin Castle on Saturday 8pm £16.50, with Seahorses in tow, Suede duelling with Catatonia at the Castle the following day, 8pm £15.50. Ireland's own Divine Comedy on Friday £13.50 003531 4569 569. Ryanair flights from £59 0541 569 569

## SPORT AND LEISURE

## Reach for the sky

**Sport:** A great climax to a great season in basketball as the Budweiser Championship finals come to Wembley Arena over the weekend to crown the best team in the country. Playboy TV Leopards (it's a team) aim to add the trophy to their National Cup and Budweiser League titles. Sky TV and over 15,000 people expected over the two days. Sat 8pm/Sun noon 0181-900 1234

**Show:** The Classic Car Show at the NEC this year celebrates the 50th birthday of Ferrari, with



Picture: Laurie Lewis

versions of the Prancing Horse from each decade on display. Birmingham, Halls 3.3A.4 & outdoors Fri 3-Mon 5:30am-5:30pm £9.50/£14 Free. Adv booking: classic car meets/readers Classic Car/65+/groups £8 0121 767 4400

## CURRENT AFFAIRS

## Cross purposes

**Election Day:** Voting 7am-10pm. Then it's the turn of the Dimblebys and Co. On BBC David D leads the way with Peter Snow and his huge "virtual reality" swingometer, plus new boy Jeremy Paxman in an interviewing studio "lair". Brother Jonathan heads ITV's challenge, with Sue Lawley and Alastair Burnet and, God help us, a full-scale virtual reality House of Commons. On the radio (4) it's James Naughtie for less over-excitement. Coverage: BBC1 9:55pm Radio 4/5/ITV most regions 10pm.

Or ... you could take out the new video of the brilliant movie *Breaking the Waves*, set far away from the wilds of Westminster in a windswept Scottish hamlet and directed by Lars von Trier. Oscar-nominated Emily Watson in the lead role. (18, Fox Guild, rental, available today)

Research: James Aufenast

"ARE you going to win?" they ask every candidate who has a snowball's chance in hell. "Absolutely, come and join our party on Friday night," is the reply. "Will it take place, win or lose?" "Yes."

Most people have the good manners not to turn up for political wakes. On the morning after the results have been declared, when the defeated candidate is drunk and his minders move around like latter-day lotus-eaters, the phones ring ceaselessly with excuses for staying away from the jollities – unexpected memorial services, contact with contagious disease and visits to the vet all feature highly.

But when you invited your friends and your helpers and the local dignitaries, you did say "whatever the result" and some of the bastards thought you meant it and turn up.

To compare a post-election wake with a funeral ignores one important fact: there is a finality about a funeral. Election wakes, often featuring the same *dramatis personae*, recur with monotonous regularity.

When I was first elected an MP, at a by-election in July 1973, the count was held on the morning after the vote, and the result announced in the early afternoon, only a few hours before the Conservatives' "victory" party at the most prestigious banqueting venue in the constituency – The Maltings in Ely.

Seven months later, at the general election in February 1974, and then nine months after that, at the second general election of that year, they again booked The Maltings, though each time it was we who celebrated, in an upstairs room at The Griffin Inn.

"It was *déjà vu* all over again," said a man on his return from The Maltings in Ely after the 1979 election, the fourth in a row the Conservatives had lost.

Celebrations that mark success at the polls are entirely joyous, even better than office parties because the next morning you do not meet those with whom you behaved so disgracefully the night before.

When you win, guests bring food and drink; and all that a sensible victor need do is provide glasses, ice, mineral water and damp cloths.

Losers' parties are different: only drink is important; never mind what drink, so long as there is a sufficiency, and do not worry about food.

I have yet, at such occasions, to meet a citizen who complains that the man has not only lost his seat but also served corned beef sandwiches past their sell-

by date and in need of pickles. The planning of a celebration in a marginal seat is not easy. Guinness and champagne are best. The former is seriously sombre in colour, bitter to the palate and helpful to those seeking slow oblivion. Provision of the latter shows you never expected anything other than to win.

And if there should be some niggling hope of a replay in the not-too-distant future ... investigation into levels of campaign spending, the ill-health of the winner ... you can always pour the one into the other. (Champagne poured on to Guinness makes less fizz than vice versa. An Australian fizz called Yolumba is a good all-purpose sparkler; only morons corrode Dom Perignon with stout.)

Sit-down meals, when you are uncertain which way the vote will go, are not to be recommended. Caterers need notice. To ask them to provide alternatives for victory and defeat – lobster or black pudding followed by raspberries in *eau de vie* or seed cake – is outwith their capability.

Making the most of other people's good fortune is ever a sensible *modus operandi*. At the end of the last war, my father, who was a gourmand and *bon viveur*, frustrated by years of rationing, had a map of Europe pinned to his office wall in London and a book of ethnic restaurants on his desk. As the Allied armies advanced and liberated Greece, Hungary, Belgium and then France, so did my father arrive at the eating-houses of those lands and joined in the jollity.

How did an anglicised Austro-Hungarian get away with singing tuncless anthems while drinking free vodka, munching complimentary *pojarski* in a Polish hostelry in Soho? The answer is: the greater the joy, the lighter the security. The same is true of political victory parties too.

Rather as I used to advise my supporters to accept lifts to the polls in Conservative vehicles, which were usually smarter than those of the Liberals, so in 1987, when I lost my seat, only about a third of the folk who usually came to my victory parties made it to the wake. But there were uncounted sightings of many of my usual suspects at the reception given by my successor, a veritable soirée with a binge on top, it appears to have been.

For those to whom a good party is more important than the result of the election, now is the proper time to make contingency plans for Friday.

MY  
WEEKCLEMENT  
FREUD

**To compare a  
post-election  
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funeral ignores  
one important  
fact: there is a  
finality about a  
funeral.  
Election wakes  
occur with  
monotonous  
regularity**

## Apollo bows out

**Dance:** The Royal Ballet's mixed programme at Covent Garden on Wednesday has undergone a sea change. Glen Tetley's world-premiered work *New Tetley Ballet* and George Balanchine's *Symphony in C* are still there, but Balanchine's Apollo has gone after the Trust demanded casting notification. The company can still boast dancers Deborah Bull and Doreen Russell, which makes one wonder just what the Trust was worried about. Kenneth Macmillan's *Judas Tree* (above) is the replacement, depicting gang rape. Opens Thursday. Ends 15 May. 7:30pm £2-24.50 0171-304 4000

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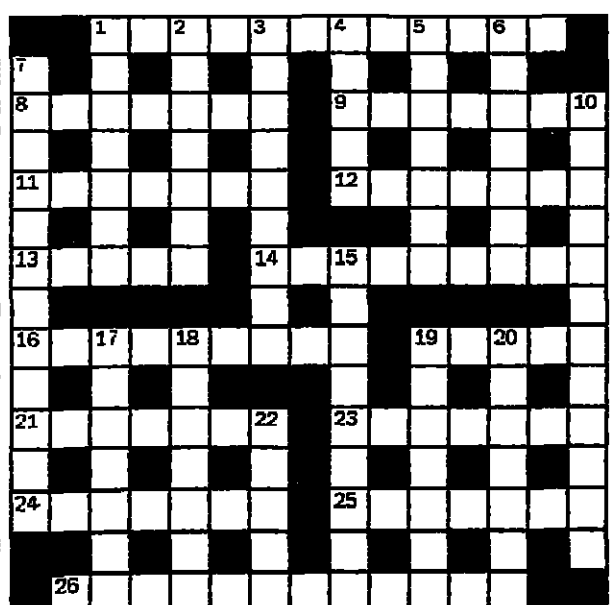
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## THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3284, Monday 28 April

By Fortia



24 Presidential handicap? (7)  
25 Dig's scheduled for Somerset town (7)  
26 Be decisive and settle chap's worry about one (3,3,6)

**DOWN**  
1 Stock drink? (4-3)  
2 Going on home to practice (3,5)  
3 Endless bad luck comes right at last for tough guy (9)  
4 Ring tenor about keynote musical piece (5)  
5 Naval officer is harbouring the German attackers (7)  
6 US city's elegant past (7)  
7 Area shouldn't be ruined completely (5,3,4)  
8 Risk phoning after put down (3,2,3,4)

**ACROSS**  
1 Novel souvenir of a seaside holiday (8,4)  
8 Return with gold constituent (7)  
9 Small number getting into trouble (7)  
11 Grenadier soldiers follow troop leader in front (3-4)  
12 People in authority accepting blame for treatment (7)  
13 Opposed to American investing further (5)  
14 Definitely establishes building land is on hold (5-4)  
16 Passing corner structure that's unsafe (5-4)  
19 Told of shelter in Lancashire (5)  
21 Verdi opera containing element of drama (7)  
23 Nearby, around midnight one catches sound (7)